GOLD! The cry rang out in 1849. Sierra Life takes you to the Gold Country for a look at yesterday and today with tips on panning for your own gold!

September/October 1987 $3.00

Sierra Life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HIGH SIERRA

IN SEARCH OF SIERRA GOLD — The beginners guide to panning

THE CARDINAL MINE • MARIPOSA • COLUMBIA

JOHN R. TAYLOR — Creating art from gold

MAMMOTH TRIVIA QUIZ • THE RACCOON

JOHN BACHAR — The world's most acclaimed rock climber

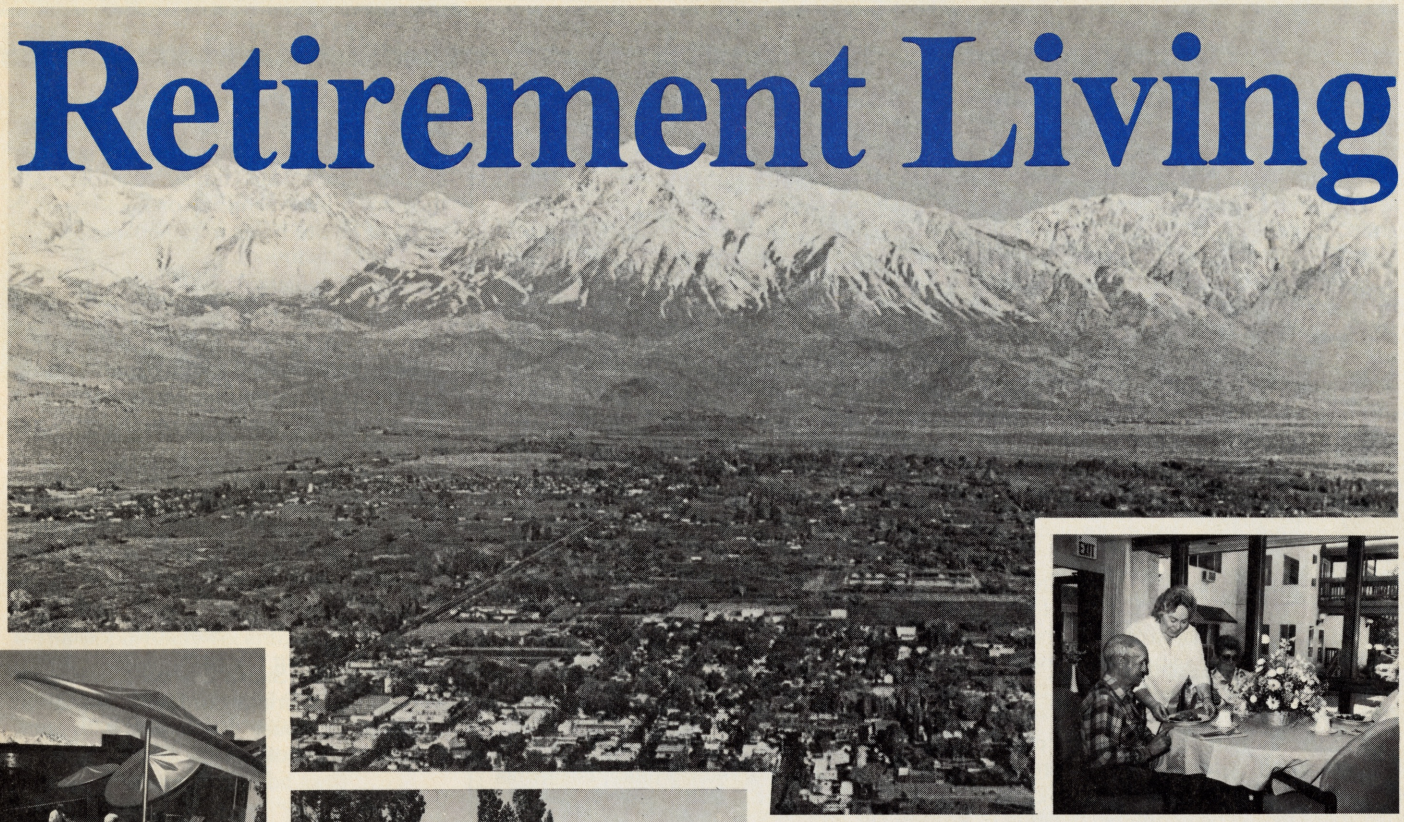
INCISED STONES — These ancient works are described and illustrated for the first time in Sierra Life!

0 74270 11819 0 09

One of the most spectacular forms of "Sierra Gold."

Mike McWherter Photo

Retirement Living



Discover . . .
Retirement living at its best!

- Ideal location and chauffered transportation
- Close proximity to shopping and medical facilities
- Underground parking garage
- Convenient elevator service
- Security features for your safety
- Three delicious meals each day
- Attendents on duty 24 hours a day to assist you
- Congenial and caring attitude of personnel
- Calendar of scheduled events and activities
- Furnished studio apartments with kitchens and private bath
- Balcony views of the beautiful Sierra
- Beauty salon, sundeck, library
- Rooms cleaned and fresh linens weekly
- We welcome small pets

All the amenities are included in one monthly rate starting at $578 per month! Enjoyable, worry-free retirement living is now affordable at **Sierra Country Club** *in Bishop, California.*

Sierra Country Club accommodates its residents!

For more information on Independent Retirement Living
Please call collect:
(619) 873-3100
Ask for Kim Green

Sierra Country Club
369 East Pine Street/Bishop, CA 93514

Yes, I would like more information on **Sierra Country Club** *living.*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *State* _____ *Zip* _____

Telephone: (_____) _____

LETTERS

My sister-in-law gave me a copy of your May/June 1987 issue. I enjoyed the magazine tremendously — especially "An Ill Wind Blowing." I have emphysema and the suffering is greatly increased when the winds are blowing.

I believe the residents of The Owens Valley should contact their supervisors and demand that the dust blowing off Owens Lake be stopped.

Name Withheld at Readers Request
Bishop, California

Your article, "An Ill Wind Blowing" in the May/June 1987 issue, inspires this letter.

I recently moved back to Vista after two and one half years in Bishop. I soon learned that the dust from Owens Dry Lake was most damaging to existing lung problems which appeared to rapidly worsen while I lived there.

Officials should use whatever means available to solve the air pollution problem instead of denying its existence. Perhaps then there would be economic benefits as well as health benefits.

Edith Pratt
Vista, California

Appalled! Not necessarily at the health harming revelations to Owens Valley residents as a result of Owens Dry Lake dust — that is a widely-known fact of life in the Eastern Sierra.

Being appalled comes from the political shenanigans which go on continually among the elected and appointed officials of Inyo and Mono counties. It appears their loyalties lie with special interest groups rather than with the people who elected them.

Political interests, which by their very nature must be opposed to the revelations contained in your article, should be handed a determined "That's Enough" from the victimized public. I hope your series of articles dealing with Owens Dry Lake dust will invigorate the voters into action. It's time we voted into office only those with the wisdom and vision to stop the destruction currently going on in the Eastern Sierra.

The best of luck to the author of this series.

Helen G. Eilts
Crowley Lake, California

Ed: The mail recieved as a result of this article has been overwhelming. We thank each and every one of you for taking time to write. "An Ill Wind Blowing" will continue in the November/December 1987 issue.

Throughout the years, whenever I've passed through Bishop, I've stopped to buy your magazine. It is so good, and the articles are always timely regardless of their age. Please send info on back issues, I want to fill the holes in my collection!

Joseph L. Johnson
Sierra Madre, California

I was in Lone Pine and just happened to buy a copy of Sierra Life. I enjoyed reading the articles so much that I am subscribing for future issues.

I subscribe to practically all the popular outdoor magazines on mountaineering, backpacking, rock climbing, etc., and I feel your's is the best written and compehensive of all. Keep up the good work!

Ed Willis
San Jose, California

Glad to see Sierra Life back, missed it very much. It brings our favorite vacation area to our house year round with good articles and photos.

Bernard Verheyen
Las Vegas, Nevada

Ed: You'll be seeing a lot more of Sierra Life in the future! Some exiting things are happening . . . stay tuned!

Tim Snyder Photo

BISHOP COUNTRY CLUB

Pat Liscio, General Manager
Course Open To The Public

CALL FOR STARTING TIMES
(619) 873-5828

LOCATED ONE MILE SOUTH OF BISHOP

GOLF INSTRUCTION •
RENTAL CLUBS •
DRIVING RANGE •
SNACK BAR •
PRO SHOP •
NEXT TO RV PARK •
BANQUET FACILITIES •

Tuesday — Ladies Day •
Wed/Thurs — •
Senior Citizens Days (Save 50%)
Saturday — Men's Day •

BCC
BISHOP C.C.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

I learned to ski last winter, climbed a 12,000 foot peak this summer, and then sat on a mountain top freezing all night so that I could take part in the Harmonic Convergence at dawn. Just when I thought I had conquered all the ultimate challenges . . . I discovered Wall Street.

Wall Street really isn't much different from climbing mountains. The idea is to go up without falling. Since I know a thing or two about climbing mountains, I've decided to "climb" the stock market.

The opportunity recently presented itself to merge SIERRA LIFE with a large publicly traded publishing company. I am happy to announce that the merger has been completed, and now the "climb" begins. (This is going to be fun!)

I've heard about those "penny stocks" that sky-rocket from 50¢ to $200.00 and above . . . I think I've found one. Chartwell Publishing Company, Inc. trades on the over-the-counter market and has all the right tickets for a meteoric rise. Management consists of: K.T. Mao, Chairman of the Board, a graduate of Cornell University with 25 years of experience in corporate and financial management; Dr. Janice Jones, President and founder of the company, has an extensive background on Wall Street and in investment banking; Thomas H. Johnson, Vice President-Finance, has over 25 years of experience in various phases of finance and administration; and Fred Boneberg, Group Vice President-Publishing, was formerly Vice President/Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and a member of the Board of Directors of the DALLAS TIMES HERALD, and a 30-year veteran with the TIMES MIRROR COMPANY.

Now, just to get into the true spirit of SIERRA LIFE, I think management really should climb a mountain. Let's see . . . we could start with something easy . . . let me think . . . oh, how about . . . MT. WHITNEY! (*Does anyone know how to freeze-dry Diet Coke? Carrying all those cans on my last climb was the pits!*)

Sandie Pramann
Publisher/Editor

CHAIRS 15 & 24
AT YOUR DOOR . . .
EXCLUSIVELY AT THE —

SUMMIT Condominiums
Mammoth Lakes, California
A Year 'round Resort

- Fully equipped kitchens
- Cable TV
- Wood-burning fireplaces
- Underground parking
- Spas and saunas
- Linens
- Laundry facilities
- Near X-country skiing facilities
- Close to Mammoth's finest shopping mall & restaurants
- Ask about our 5 & 7 Day SPECIALS
- Walk across street to Chairs 15 & 24

FEATURING
MID-WEEK PACKAGE PLANS
INCLUDING
LIFT TICKETS & LODGING!

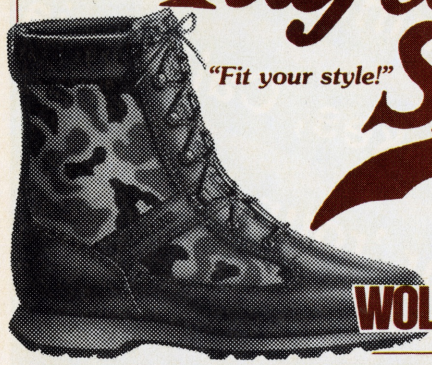
For Information & Reservations:
EASTERN SIERRA RESERVATIONS
Post Office Box 1058
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(619) 934-3127 • (619) 934-3000
CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-421-8240

AT THE REST STOP IN OLANCHA, CALIFORNIA
Your Hosts: Rodney & Sandy Lane

Coso JUNCTION Ranch

NOW FEATURING — C.J.'s CAFE

SANDWICHES • GROCERIES • BAIT • TACKLE
SODA • BEER • WINE • MOBILE GAS • PROPANE
P.O. BOX 176/OLANCHA, CA 93549/(619) 764-2264



Taylor's Shoes

"Fit your style!"

298 N. Main Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 872-5583

SORELS
All Sizes Available to Size 14

WOLVERINE® BOOTS & SHOES
Waterproof Gore-Tex
Warm 3M Thinsulate
Wolverine Quality & Comfort

Erick Schat's™ DUTCH BAKERY OF BISHOP

"Home of the Original Sheepherder Bread"

®1938

ERICK SCHAT'S BAKERY

Fine European Pastries
Cappuccino
"Custom Made Sandwich Bar"
Can't wait till your next trip to Bishop for your favorite product? Call us, we'll mail direct to you!

A Little Taste of HOLLAND in Downtown Bishop!
See Our IMPORTED GIFTS

763 N. Main Street • Bishop, CA 93514 • (619) 873-7156

Publisher/Executive Editor
Sandie Pramann

Contributing Editors
Mike McWherter
Doug Robinson
Meredith Nelson
Gordon Wiltsie
Mark Allison

Contributing Photographers
Doug Robinson
Mike McWherter
Gordon Wiltsie
John Stow
Michael Pope

Design Consultant
Virginia Levine

Production/Business Management
Diane Connors

Receptionist/General Secretary
Mary Ludwick

Senior Account Manager
Mike Martell, Eastern Sierra

Account Managers
Mike Keeney, Western Sierra
John Stow, Northern Sierra

Published by:
Chartwell Publishing Company, Inc.
900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 702
Los Angeles, California 90017
(213) 628-2812

Editorial & Business Offices:
12625 High Bluff Drive, Suite 107
San Diego, California 92130
(619) 481-7659

Sales Offices:
699 West Line Street
Bishop, California 93514
(619) 873-3320

K.T. Mao, Chairman of the Board
Janice A. Jones, President
Fred Boneberg, Group V.P.-Publishing
Richard E. Bye, Senior V.P.-Publishing
Thomas H. Johnson, Vice President-Finance

Sierra Life is published bi-monthly by Chartwell Publishing Company, Inc. Controlled circulation postage paid at Bishop, California 93514.

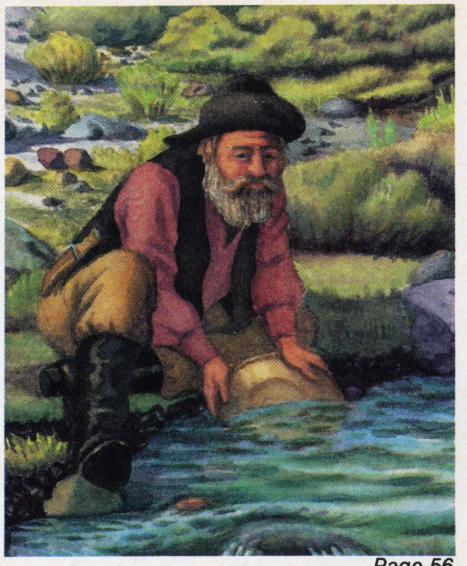
All contents copyrighted 1987. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission from the Publisher is prohibited. Registered Trade Marks: SIERRA LIFE The Magazine of the High Sierra and SIERRA LIFE MAGAZINE.

Subscription Rates: $16.00 per year. Foreign countries $6.00 per year additional. Single copy price $3.00. Change of Address: Six weeks advance notice. Please include old as well as new address with zip codes. Editorial Contributions: Manuscripts and photographs submitted to **Sierra Life** must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with return postage affixed. The Publisher assumes no responsibility for loss or damage of unsolicited material.

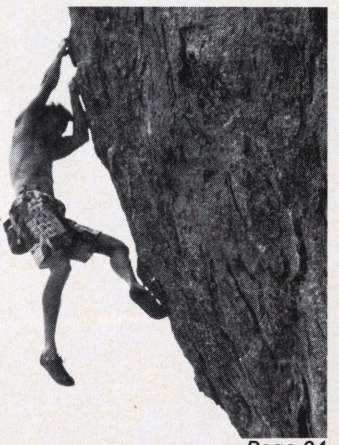
Sierra Life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HIGH SIERRA

VOLUME VII SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1987 NUMBER 2



Page 56



Page 24

Page 70

FEATURES

9 Mariposa
Rediscovering the Southern Tip of the Mother Lode

18 Incised Stones
These Ancient Works are Described and Illustrated for the First Time in Sierra Life.

38 Columbia State Historic Park
A walk into Yesterday

43 The Cardinal Mine
The Amazing History of a Bishop Creek Bonanza

56 In Search of Sierra Gold
The Beginners Guide for Panning Gold

62 Mammoth Trivia Quiz
So you think you know Mammoth? Take this quiz and see how you score.

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters to the Editor

5 Publisher's Letter

24 Sierra Profile — Rock Star
The John Bachar Story

36 Sierra Wildlife — The Raccoon

52 Sierra Arts — John R. Taylor
Gold Nuggets, Creating Art From Nature

60 Sierra Properties

70 Sierra Flora & Fauna
The Snow Plant, Natures Mystery

Our Cover:

"The Prospector," a 12"x 14" watercolor by Mark Allison of Bishop, California. This original painting may be purchased through Sierra Life. Unframed, $545 plus tax, and framed, $600 plus tax.

OLD MINE BLACKSMITH SHOP
ASSAY OFFICE

Mariposa

Rediscovering the Southern Tip of the Mother Lode

by Ellen Finan and Bob Austin
Photography by Russell Frank

Native American inhabitants of the southern San Joaquin Valley — namely the Miwuk, Yokut, Tabutabatal and Katsuii — gave it an Indian name which meant "Valley of Flowers." Fittingly, the 1806 Spanish expedition into the southern San Joaquin named the vicinity around the Merced River *Las Mariposas*, for the flurries of butterflies that surged through the undulating grasslands and oak-clustered Sierra foothills. This dubbing by members of the Moraga expedition was carried forward in the land grant of *Las Mariposas* given in 1844 to Juan Baptista Alvarado by the Mexican Governor of California, Michel Torena. In turn Alvarado sold the grant to Colonel John Charles Fremont in 1847 for $3,000.

Located on the southernmost tip of the California Mother Lode, Mariposa gained considerable repute as a mining region in the 1850's. Originally a placer mining site, Mariposa established hard rock mining interests in 1849. The workings of the Mariposa Mine, at one time possessing a 40-stamp mill that processed over $2,200,000 in gold ore encrusted in quartz, can still be seen from town although the mine ceased full operations in the early 1900's.

Mariposa County was once the largest county in California, comprising one-sixth of California's land mass. It included all of the present counties of Inyo, Mono, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, Merced, and Kern, along with part of what is now Los Angeles county.

The original county seat was in Agua Frio, a placer mining site just west of the town of Mariposa. In 1850 Agua Frio boasted a notable population. However, neighboring Mariposa was rapidly developing, and by 1852 became the county seat, gaining superiority over the mining districts of Agua Frio, Bear Valley, Quartzburg, Hornitos and Mormon Bar.

The Mariposa townsite of 1850 was located along the banks of Mariposa Creek. Its saloons, stores and gaming emporiums were surrounded on the flats by a tent city of miner's hovels. When the *Las Mariposas* grant was sold by Fremont to J.F. "Quartz" Johnson in July 1859, the townsite gradually relocated to higher and drier ground. In 1866 the relocation was expedited by a fire, which consumed "Old Town." A few of the buildings dating from the 1850's which were located outside the perimeter of "Old Town" survived. Most notable is the Mariposa County Court House, the oldest seat of justice in continual use west of the Mississippi. Located off Highway 140 on the north side of town, the courthouse was built in 1854 from hand-planed lumber taken from the nearby forests and nailed together with square cut nails. The corners of the building were fitted with mortises. A fireproof vault, later enlarged, was added to the courthouse in 1861. In 1985 the contents of the vault were moved across the street to the new Hall of Records where many a curious historian can whet his appetite by reading transcripts of early court rulings and original editions of the *Old Gazette*, the local

Mariposa County Courthouse in Mariposa, California. The courtroom on the second floor contains the original seats, tables and judge's bench, appearing as they did during John C. Freemont's time. *Leroy Radanovich photo*

newspaper which has recorded Mariposa's past from 1855 on. A 267 pound bell, which sounds the time for the old English-made clock, was installed in the cupola in 1866. The courtroom on the second floor contains the original seats, tables and judge's bench, appearing just as they did during Fremont's time. It is interesting to note that many of California's mining laws originated within the walls of this courthouse.

Closer to the main section of town, overlooking Mariposa on the corner of 5th Street and Bullion, is the jail. Costing $14,474 to build in 1858, the jail was constructed of a granite rock native to Mariposa County and was in use until 1960. However, as the townfolk will tell you, this granite one is not the original. The first jail was a wooden structure and as legend goes, an angry inmate set fire to it, burning himself up along with the wooden jail.

Also in the center of town, at the corner of 5th and Highway 140 (called Charles Street after Freemont's son) are five other structures of historic interest: Trabucco's Warehouse, the Gold Coin Cafe, Hull House, Schlageter's Hotel, and a building that now houses a barbershop and optometrist but earlier in this century held Mariposa's first bank.

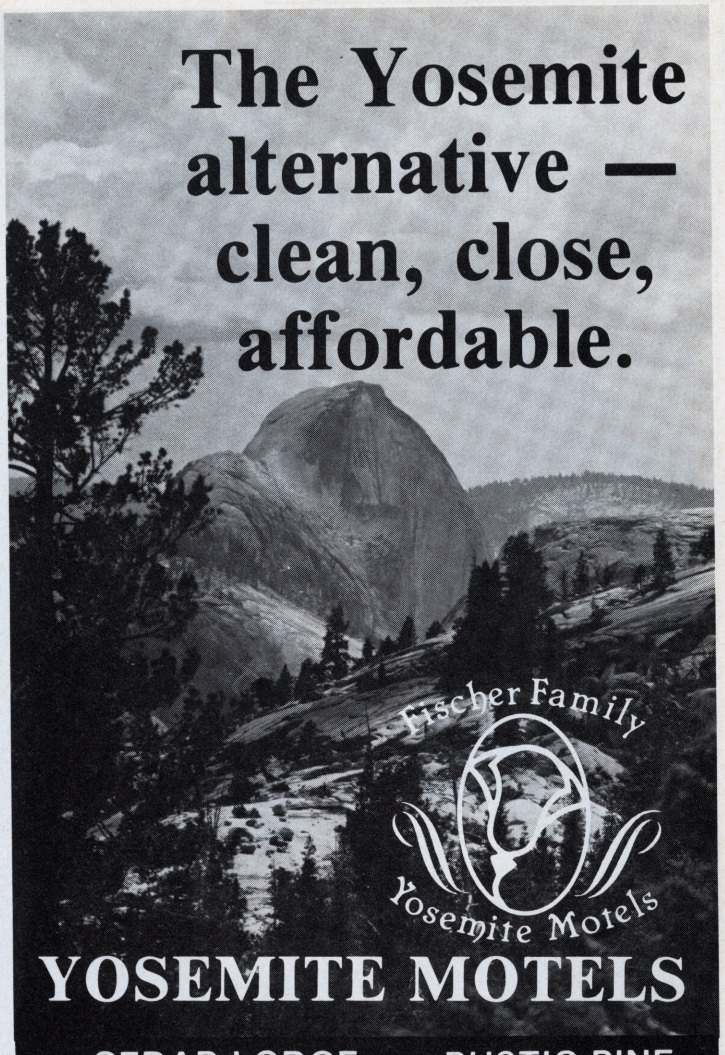
Trabucco's Warehouse was restored by John Trabucco, the nephew of Louis Trabucco who, according to Jesse Fremont's *Mother Lode Narratives*, owned a general store in Bear Valley during the Fremonts' intermittent two-year stay in Mariposa County. This iron-doored, brick and stone warehouse survived the fire of 1866.

On the same side of Charles Street lie the Gold Coin and Hull House. Built of adobe and brick, the Gold Coin Saloon has a trap door to the basement from the upstairs bar that reputedly was an underground tunnel to Mariposa Mine. Fremont's assay office was located in this building. Adjacent to the Gold Coin, the Hull House now houses a cozy restaurant where a Wells Fargo office once operated. The next building, now housing a barbershop and optometrist, once contained the Bank of America which opened its doors in the 1930's. Before that time all monetary dealings were handled in Merced or at Trabucco's grocery store across the street which dates back to 1887.

On the corner of Charles Street and 5th Street is the Schlageter Hotel, the stagecoach stop for many a traveler on his way to Wawona in Yosemite. Built in 1859 as the Pine Tree Hotel, its name was changed with new ownership in 1862. The story goes that an addition to the hotel was built eight feet into the street, forcing Schlageter to purchase the land from the town.

Vestiges of the area's past can be seen by following a circular route north of Mariposa to Bear Valley, then southeast to Hornitos and back to Mariposa.

Five miles north of Mariposa lies Mount Bullion, named after Fremont's father-in-law, Senator Thomas Hart Benton, nicknamed "Old Bullion," who was well-known for his championship of hard currency. Mount Bullion, originally the Princeton Mine, possessed a 24-



YOSEMITE MOTELS

CEDAR LODGE
P.O. Box C
El Portal, Ca. 95318
(209) 379-2612

RUSTIC PINE LODGE
40489 Hwy. 41
Oakhurst, Ca. 93644
(209) 683-7664

YOSEMITE GATEHOUSE LODGE
34001 Hwy. 120
Groveland, Ca. 95321
(209) 379-2260

BEST WESTERN YOSEMITE WAY STATION
P.O. Box 1989
Mariposa, Ca. 95338
(209) 966-7545
(800) 528-1234

YOSEMITE VIEW LODGE
P.O. Box D
El Portal, Ca. 95318
(209 379-2681

SONORA INN
160 So. Washington
Sonora, Ca. 95370
(209) 532-7468
(800) 321-5268

SLEEP KING INN
And on your way up Hwy. 99
Hwy. 99 and Olive
Fresno, Ca. 93728
(209) 442-1082

Built in 1850, this is all that remains of the Pendola store in Bear Valley. The Pendolas grew vegetables and hauled them to nearby mining camps. Mr. Pendola was John C. Freemont's bootmaker. The iron doors at the front of the store came from the East Coast and cost $800.00.

stamp steam-driven mill. Although the mine and mill became idle in 1867, production continued sporadically until the early 1900's. Estimates of Mount Bullion's gold production reach $5,000,000 (the figure of $4,397,743 has been documented).

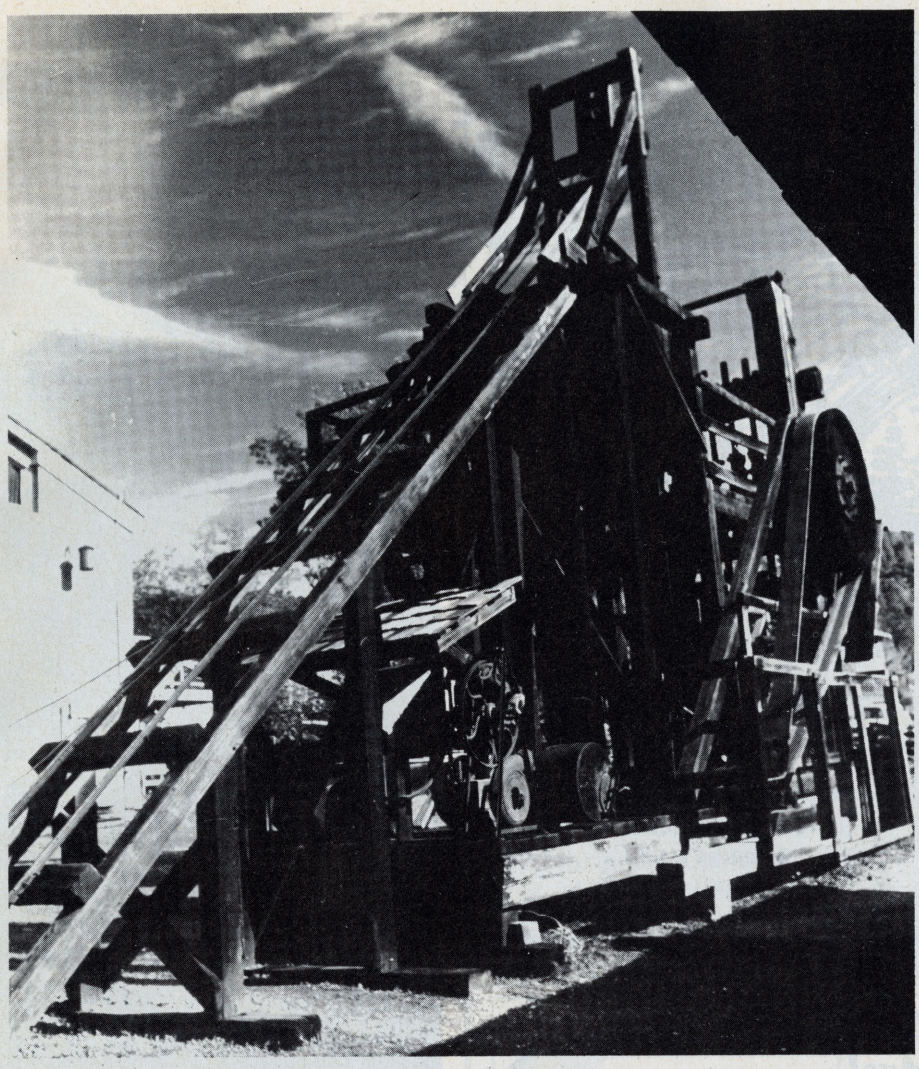
North of Mount Bullion on Highway 49, lies Bear Valley, now housing only a general store/museum and a small but very good restaurant, the Bon Ton Cafe. Built in 1860, the restaurant has housed a variety of establishments, including a saloon, a Chinese coffee shop, a Wells Fargo office and a boarding house. Further down the street the remains of Louis Trabucco's store can be seen. In addition to providing the miner's practical needs, the store sold squeezings from local grapes. But this unpretentious setting imparts little to the traveler of Bear Valley's former grandeur. At one time Bear Valley boasted a population of more than 3,000. In 1850, placer gold deposits were found and the town thrived for a short time; then later in 1854 quartz veins were discovered in and around Bear Valley and in 1855 a stamp mill was established.

In the late 1850's Bear Valley became the headquarters of Colonel John C. Fremont's *Las Mariposas* mining interests. Fremont's office was in the Oso House. Miners and others connected to nearby mining operations contributed in making this a busy, active community.

West of Bear Valley on Route J16 lies Hornitos, a true "ghost town." The sounds of a creaking windmill and of a lone rooster's bravado break the silence. Bare Chinese "Trees of Heaven" dot the landscape and a small, white, wooden Catholic Church on the hill captivates the imagination. Yet its dominating presence is inconsistent with the town's past . . . Hornitos was once the home of the infamous Mexican bandit, Joaquin Murietta.

Hornitos, meaning "little ovens," drives its name from the stone above-ground ovens used by the Germans during the Gold Rush. One example of these ovens can be seen behind the Catholic, another on the Old Toll Road to Mariposa.

Hornitos was established in 1850 by some Mexican miners, gamblers and dance hall women who had been expelled from nearby



A four stamp mill is still in operating condition outside the Mariposa Museum. Gold, embedded in quartz, was carried in rail cars up the ramp at left, dumped into the mill, and crushed by four heavy iron stamps.

Quartzburg by a group of vigilantes. Hornitos became a rough-and-ready town full of saloons. It was during this time that Joaquin Murietta moved in. His favorite hang-out was Rosie's Fandango Hall. Legend has it that the tunnel across the street from the still-standing Fandango Hall led into the house of Murietta's girlfriend. Behind her home was a stable where Murietta could stage a quick escape — as he frequently did.

Other remaining signs of Gold Rush Days are the slate walls criss-crossing the hills surrounding Hornitos. These walls, laid without mortar, were built by Chinese laborers who were paid 25¢ a day for 25 linear feet. As with most towns established in the quest for gold, opium dens were common. The presence of underground tunnels throughout the town corroborate the stories of opium dens, escape routes and tunnels to nearby mines.

Hornitos was the site of Domingo Ghirardelli's first store. Ghirardelli, the late, famous chocolate maker in San Francisco, began in Hornitos as a merchant. Some of the walls of his store are still standing, identified by a plaque observable from the road.

Hornitos, once an incorporated town in Mariposa County, at one time had a population of over 14,000. Some $40,000 in gold was shipped daily from the old Wells Fargo Express office which was the first in the county and was established in 1852.

Although founded in the pans and bateaus of placer miners and built

Relive the history of the Gold Country, Yosemite National Park and Mariposa

through the pages of

Heritage of Law and Press

125th COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

$29.95

plus $1.80 tax and $6.00 Shipping Total: $37.75

Or subscribe to

CALIFORNIA'S OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY PUBLISHED WEEKLY

Mariposa Gazette.

And MINER

MAIL CHECKS TO:
THE MARIPOSA GAZETTE
P.O. BOX 38
MARIPOSA, CA 95338

IN COUNTY: $12.00
In State: $13.00
Out of State: $14.50

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
STATE
ZIP
AMOUNT

MARIPOSA COUNTY
IT'S PURE GOLD

CRAFT CABIN

SUPPLIES
GIFTS
TOYS

GREAT IDEAS!

OPEN
Mon thru Sat

Located downstairs in the Mariposa Hotel
(209) 742-6400

Synchronicity
A METAPHYSICAL BOOKSTORE

CRYSTALS • CARDS • TAPES
Located downstairs in the Mariposa Hotel

(209) 966-4440
(209) 966-2653

The Cervines
Open: Wed - Sun

Glenda Stefura
YANKEE GALLERY
CUSTOM FRAMING AND MATTING

HOURS: 9:30 - 5 Tuesday thru Friday
9:30 - 12:00 Saturday

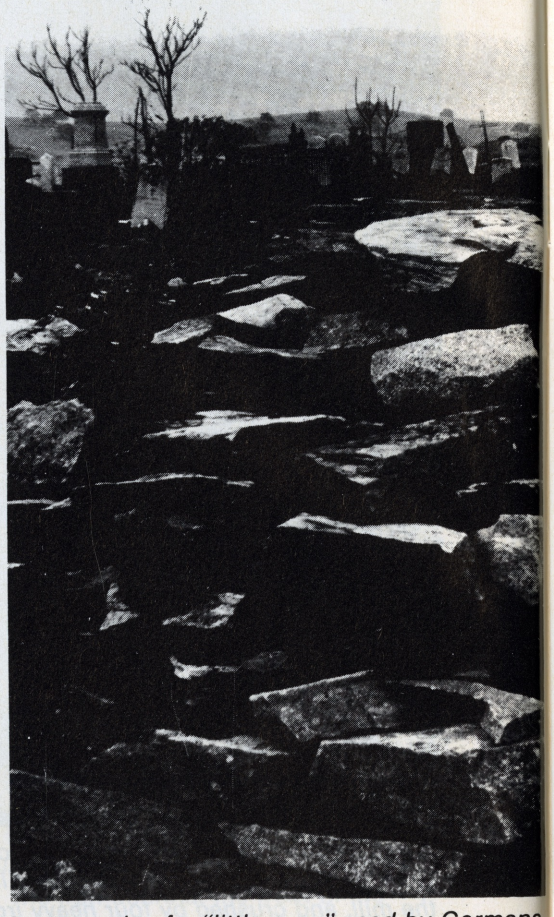
(209) 966-5878
P.O. Box 1507/8th & Highway 140/Mariposa, CA 95338

Century 21

PINEWOOD PROPERTIES

Call or write for —
FREE Map and Mariposa Brochure!

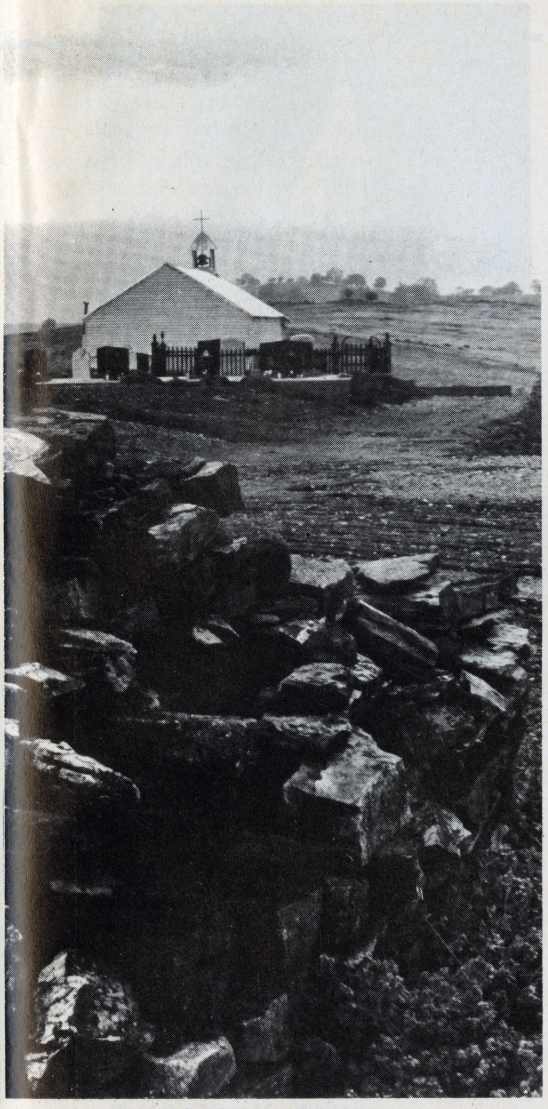
Century 21 - PINEWOOD PROPERTIES
Post Office Box 1421/ Mariposa, California 95338
1(800) 432-4595 *or (209) 966-221*



An example of a "little oven" used by Germans Hornitos was named after these ovens.

upon the economy of hard rock mining, the Mariposa area survived the closing of the stamp mills when, in the early twenties, lumber and cattle replaced mining interests. Additionally, Mariposa continued as a stopping place for those traveling to the newly established Yosemite National Park.

Today, Mariposa boasts over 12,000 residents and has an outstanding museum to commemorate its past. Built in the 1970's, the museum, run by volunteer help and the Mariposa County Historical Society, graphically displays for the visitor many a story of Mariposa's past. Among the mining regalia, the museum houses holographs of the *Dear Charley Letters* written by



in the area of Hornitos during the Gold Rush.

Horace Snow to a hometown New England friend, commencing in 1853. Recently published in book form by the Mariposa County Historical Society, the collection chronicles the everyday life of the placer miner of the 1850's. They characterize a miner who is hard-working, intelligent, often discouraged, but sometimes elated in his efforts to find gold.

Snow's letters were written in criss-cross fashion: first, the letter is written vertically; then the paper is turned horizontally and the letter is written over the first writing. Early miners employed this conservation method in order to save on prohibitive mailing costs.

The museum also has on display a reconstructed arrastre (i.e., "Chili-

Real Estate
by
Delores

Compare the 'Lifestle'
Compare the 'Prices'

Information on over 85 MARIPOSA/YOSEMITE Properties!

Call or write for FREE 'Real Estate Guide'

Real Estate by Delores
P.O. Box 1994
Mariposa, California 95338
(209) 966-5354

MARIPOSA COUNTY
IT'S PURE GOLD

Catch our Fever -
MARIPOSA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
P.O. Box 425
Mariposa, CA 95338
(209) 966-2456

A Riddle.

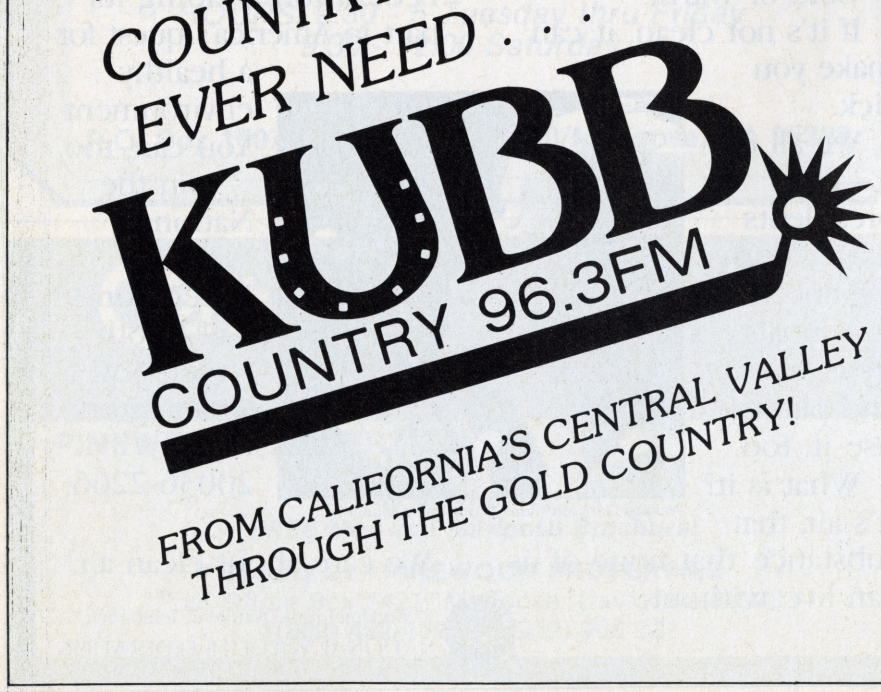
It's much better fresh.
Cold or warm.
If it's not clean, it can make you sick.
We all use it – from presidents to newborn infants.
Animals, trees, insects, and plants use it, too.
What is it?
It's air, that substance that none of us can live without.

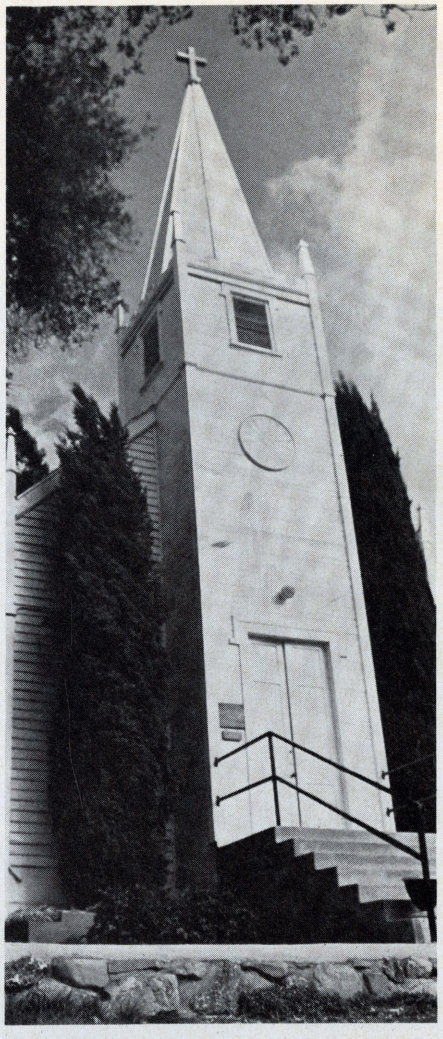
Wallace Garrison/Index Stock International Inc.

The National Wildlife Federation is doing its part in America's quest for a healthy environment You can, too.
Join the National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-2266.

We care about clean air.

Working for the Nature of Tomorrow™
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION





The Mariposa Catholic Church has been in continuous use since 1861.

mill" for crushing ore) More Modern mining equipment include a reconstructed 5-stamp mill, Gardner-Governor compressor pumps and Gould steam fittings surrounded by a reconstructed Chinese wall. Inside the museum are extensive collections of local relics, including American Indian artifacts.

The town of Mariposa is a living museum and the countryside is rich in Gold Rush history. And, if you venture downtown to the Gold Coin some early morning, you may even find the local townspeople ready to share a few anecdotes with you. □

Many thanks to Scott Pinkerton, President of the Mariposa Historical Society for his knowledge and anecdotes on Mariposa County.

SIERRA LIFE BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE!

Many of our readers have requested information on back issues of SIERRA LIFE. Listed below are issues which are available along with a partial list of contents.

NOVEMBER 1981 (No. 001)
Sierra Flashes of Fire - The Golden Trout
NUMU - The First Settlers of Owens Valley
Rock Art Treasure of the Coso Range
Pandor's Box - The Pandora Moth

DECEMBER 1981 (No. 002)
Tonopah - Long Live the Queen
The Comings & Goings of the Sierra Nevada
Darwin - History, Legends, Myth's

APRIL 1982 (No. 003)
Birth of a Valley - Death Valley
Inside Furnance Creek
Glass Carving - A Lost Art
Fossils are Frustrating
Bouldering - Rock Climbing

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1984 (No. 006)
The Mountain Lion
Bodie - California's Favorite Ghost Town
Western Men & Desert Gold
The Hydro Controversy
Cast Iron Art
Guide to Winter Sports
Pink Snow

JULY/AUGUST 1985 (No. 010)
The Great Reno Fire of 1879
Gunfighters, Highwaymen & Vigilantes
Sailboarding Sierra Style
The Well-Dressed Woman on the Trail
The Freemont Expedition
Tule Elk
Patching Down Gear
Rick Wheeler

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1986 (011)
Dave McCoy & Mammoth Mountain
Sking the Highest Traverse in North America
Mark Twain
Search Operation - Black Mountain
Water & Power - From the Book
Race to Climb Mt. Whitney

JULY/AUGUST 1986 (No. 012)
Western Movies in the Sierra
Mountain Biking
Snowshoe Thompson
Smoke Blanchard — From the Book
Fly Fishing - Crowley Lake
The Rattlesnake

MAY/JUNE 1987 (No. 013)
Naming the Lakes of the High Sierra
Sking the High Route
Death Valley & The Amargosa - The Book
An Ill Wind Blowing - The Environment
The Great Quake of 1872
Speed Freak - The Steve McKinney Story

Please order by number following issue and date listed above. Circle numbers desired.

001 002 003 006 010
011 012 013

Please send selection of back issues to:

Name _____

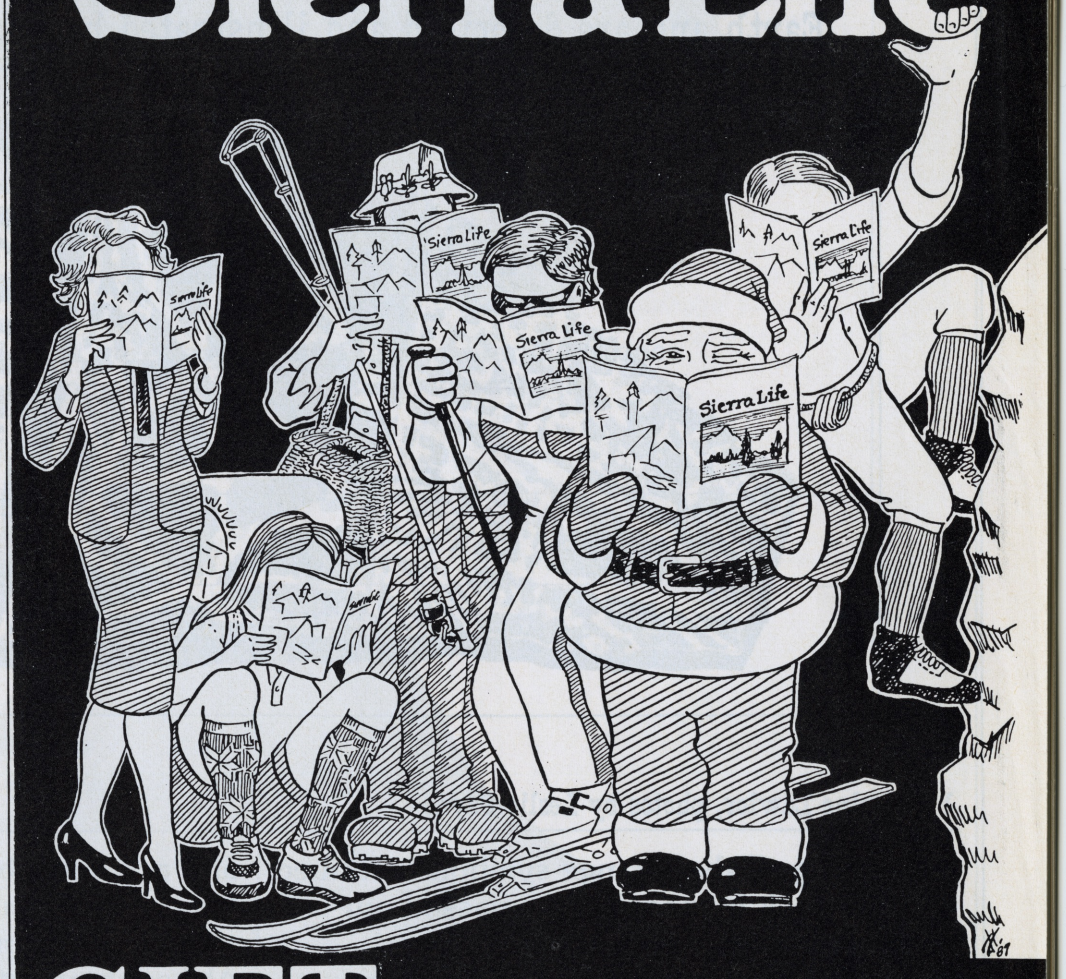
Address _____

City _____ *St.* _____ *Zip* _____

Please enclose $3.00 for each issue ordered.

Mail Order To:
Sierra Life Magazine
12625 High Bluff Dr., Suite 107
San Diego, CA 92130

the most interesting people read Sierra Life



GIFT Yourself and a friend!

Celebrating our 6th year of publication!

Please send me:
☐ *1 year for $14 (6 Issues) SAVE $2.00*
☐ *2 years for $24 (12 Issues) SAVE $8.00*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *St.* _____ *Zip* _____

Mail to: **Sierra Life**, *Circulation Department*,
12625 High Bluff Dr., Suite 107
San Diego, CA 92130

Please send my interesting friend:
☐ *1 year* ☐ *2 years*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *St.* _____ *Zip* _____

Payment enclosed ☐ *Please charge to my MasterCard* ☐ *VISA* ☐

Card No. _____ *Exp. Date* _____

ORDER NOW AND SAVE UP TO $8.00 !

INCISED STONES

These striking ancient works are found nowhere else on Earth and are described and illustrated here for the first time.

Drawing by Jim Rozzi

by Florine Lawlor, photos by Leslie Payne

Among all the strange symbols inscribed on rock by people long passed out of human knowledge, it would be difficult to designate any more mysterious or more facinating than certain small incised stone specimens from thousands of years ago that have recently come to light.

A dozen or more sites in Inyo County and in Southern Nevada disclosed quite a few of these unusual aboriginal works. Although the small, flat and irregularly shaped decorated pieces are usually of sandstone, limestone and steatite were also frequently used materials.

These striking ancient works present distinctive features found nowhere else and are described and fully illustrated here for the first time. So you see, there is after all, something new under the sun. Although of antiquity beyond reckoning, these stones are new from the fact that some museums specializing in our ancient Indians have yet to see them. Indeed, some do not even know of their existence.

Many learned men in the field of archeology believe these stones may antedate history and tradition. Principally of one common design, these incised presentments are altered only by the presence of many figures or the absence of them; some are quite stark while others

continued on page 20

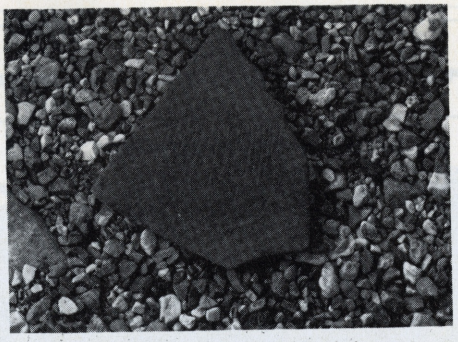
Painstaking details were carved into these mysterious stones by people long passed out of human knowledge.

Natural contours of rock were incorporated into this sandstone incised stone. The stones average in size from three to six inches square.

Incised Stones *continued*

are a bewildering maze of lines and circles.

Three to six inches square is the average size of the stones, however they may vary greatly in shape, seeming to have no characteristic form. A stone is usually divided into two sections by one of more tiny zig-zag lines. Above this intricate division a series of "hummocks" or mounds usually appear, seeming to represent tall mountain ranges. Tall stem-like lines intersected by many tiny lines presents a tree-like appearance. Half-circles or clefts near the base of the mounds resemble the mouth of a cave or niche carved into a hill. Did the designers essay a sundial, a calendar, or a token of thanks to the Great Spirit, an amulet of good luck, or did a random notion without any special significance bring them about? Could they have been maps pointing out a specific landmark, or were they meant to call attention to springs or hunting areas? Will we ever know what prompted these painstaking works?



A stone is usually divided into two sections by one or more tiny zig-zag lines.

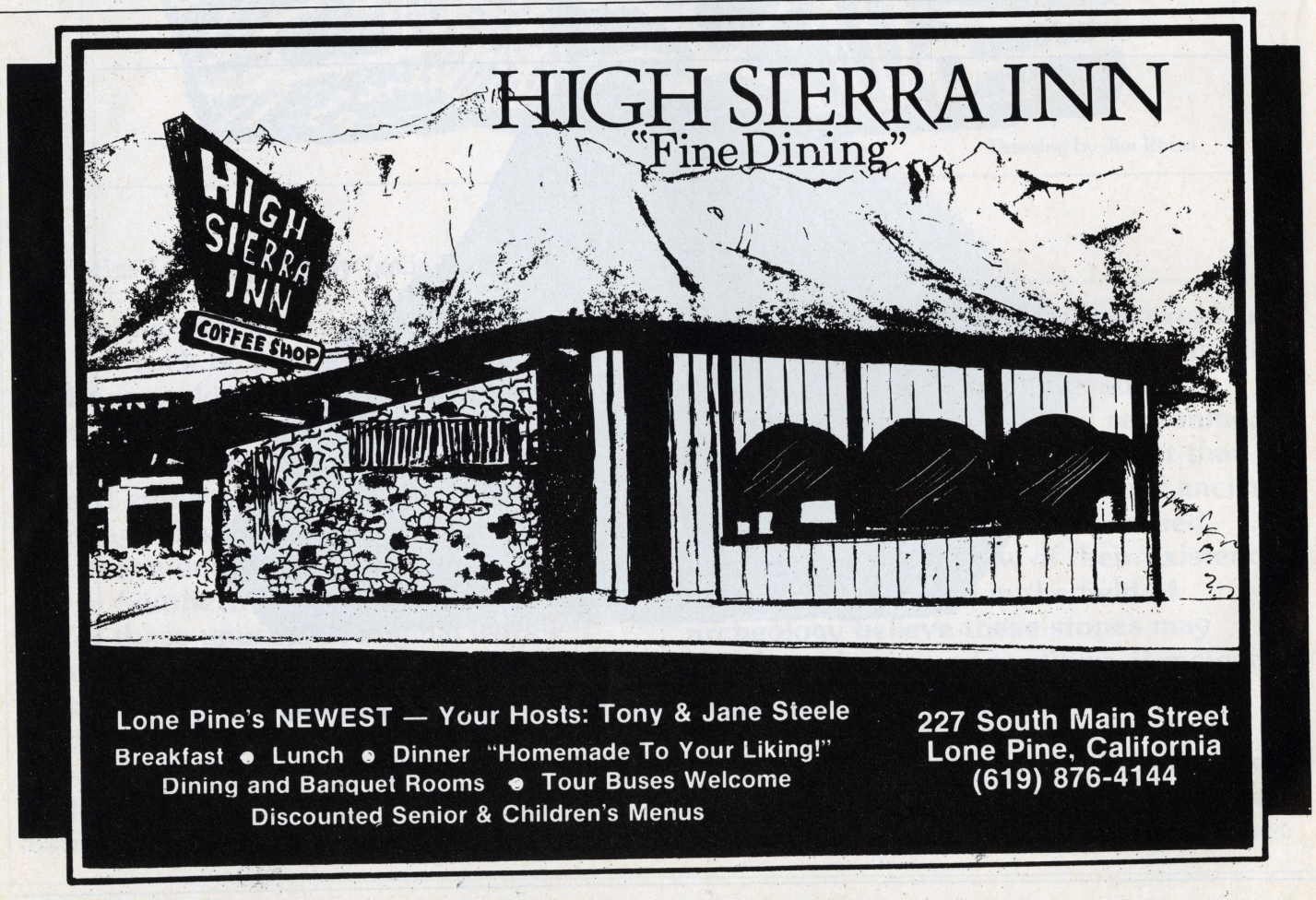
Will we ever know what prompted these painstaking works?

They are so marvelously done that the toil entailed in their execution is almost inconceivable.

Some experts believe them to be tokens of thanks for a good crop of pinon nuts because incised stones are most often found beneath these cone-bearing trees. It is not uncommon, however, to find them lying in the wide, sandy wastes of a wash or on the crest of a chiseled, arid dune.

An examination of over 400 stones belonging to me and other collectors is convincing evidence that no one knows precisely what the symbolic elements represent. They are not idle doodling and I feel that they represented much more than a good luck piece. All seem to agree that they are the most intriguing artifact of all that have been discovered in this area.

D. Carl Schuster, noted archeologist, interperts some designs as being ceremonial representations of clothing, the lines seeming to indicate stitched seams and fringes. Frequently, he feels, the


HIGH SIERRA INN
"Fine Dining"
HIGH SIERRA INN
COFFEE SHOP
Lone Pine's NEWEST — Your Hosts: Tony & Jane Steele
Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner "Homemade To Your Liking!"
Dining and Banquet Rooms • Tour Buses Welcome
Discounted Senior & Children's Menus
227 South Main Street
Lone Pine, California
(619) 876-4144

human identity of the design is established by the depiction of personal ornaments such as necklaces. Other archeologists do not agree. Unfortunately, Dr. Schuster died before his work was completed and what writings he had done were sent to his native Sweden. His conclusions were, however, that the rock pictures found in the American West were made by ancestors of our living Indians.

Two of the most unusual incised stones ever found came from a ruin on the south side of the Gila River in New Mexico. Archeologist Earl Morris dated the stones at 1100 A.D. because of the type of pot shards found on the surface of the site. Now in the Gila Pueblo collection of the Arizona State Museum, these two small stones have been studied by numerous experts, there being no known similar specimens anywhere else in America. Known as the Elephant Slabs because of the incised elephants on them, the slabs also contain birds, pumas and strange undecipherable signs. The are of hard sandstone, one-quarter inch thick, precisely incised, with obvious indications of tool slippage. They have the patinized appearance of objects taken from caves rather than open sites. Since elephants roamed North America no later than 10,000 years ago, according to bones found in the west, how these stones came to be is a great mystery.

Round, smooth river pebbles and odd-shaped rocks incised with great care have also been located in the United States and parts of Asia. While they do not seem to follow a common design as do the ones found in the American West, they do bear a remarkable similarity.

I began collecting and studying incised stones many years ago when my Paiute Indian friend, Russell "Buster" Wilson, showed me the first site he located on Arrowhead Ridge. Together we covered the ground foot by foot as time permitted. Not withstanding our progress, I feel the task of

Southern Inyo County's ONLY LOCAL Real Estate Office

Dorothy Bonnefin, *Broker*
"Your local real estate expert."

STOP BY OUR OFFICE FOR MAPS AND INFORMATION ON PROPERTIES AVAILABLE IN THE ALABAMA HILLS!

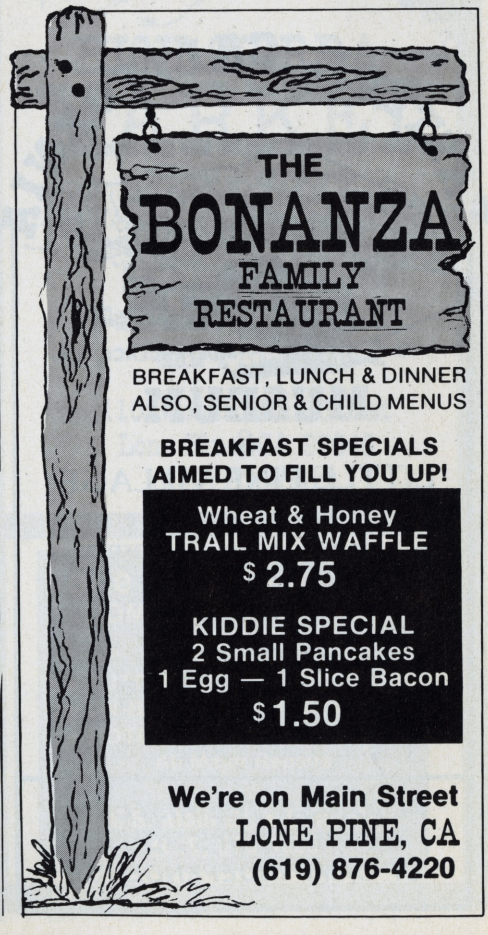
LONE PINE REALTY

310 South Main Street • Lone Pine, California 93545 • 619-876-4121

MAIRS' MARKET
"Since 1945"
Independence, California
(619) 878-2169

HIGH SIERRA REALTY

Terri Schaaf, *Owner/Broker*
H.R. "Bus" Casto, *Broker Associate*
Lavene Basse, *Sales Associate*
Yvonne Reilly, *Sales Associate*
115 West Line St. Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-6227



BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER
ALSO, SENIOR & CHILD MENUS

BREAKFAST SPECIALS AIMED TO FILL YOU UP!

Wheat & Honey
TRAIL MIX WAFFLE
$2.75

KIDDIE SPECIAL
2 Small Pancakes
1 Egg — 1 Slice Bacon
$1.50

We're on Main Street
LONE PINE, CA
(619) 876-4220

In Lone Pine, California

Dow Villa Motel

- Cable Color TV
- Coffee
- Heated Pool
- 24 Hour Phones

A friendly place to stay in the center of town, every facility for your comfort & convenience!

24 Hour Coffee Shop
Golf Package Available

YEAR 'ROUND HOT SPA
310 So. Main St./Lone Pine, CA 93545
(619) 876-5521
TOLL FREE 1 800 824-9317

EASTERN CALIFORNIA

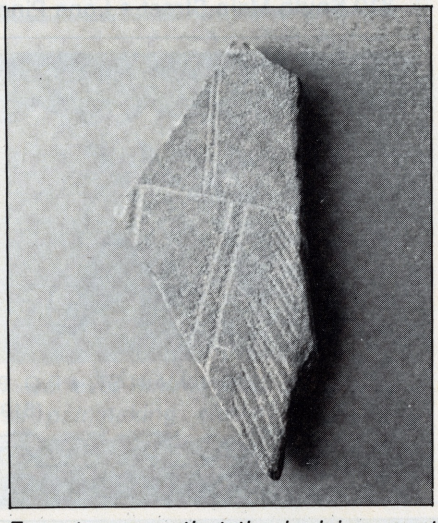
MUSEUM
&
LITTLE PINE VILLAGE
155 North Grant Street
Independence, California
Call For Hours Open —
(619) 878-2411

EXHIBITS ON:
Inyo County History
Early Mining
Paiute & Shoshone Indians

ALSO VISIT THE HISTORIC COMMANDER'S HOUSE OF CAMP INDEPENDENCE

deciphering the riddle of the mysterious incised stones has only just begun, so scant is all previous research.

Henry Raub, retired curator of the Eastern Sierra Museum in Independence, California, and Dr. Clement Meighan, Head of Anthopology at U.C.L.A. in Southern California, have formulated theories which appear to be the most logical. After careful study it was their deduction that the



Experts agree that the incising must have been done with crude needle-pointed tools called "burrins."

race of people who incised the stones in Inyo County brought the technique of incising and the method of giving this unusual type of offering with them when they descended upon the Americas from Asia. The designs used here are similar to some found in Alaska, China and Japan. The triangular motif dominates most of the stones and appears to be a record of journeys or time lapses. Next in line seems to be the pine tree whose branches are used on a great many stones in my collection in various designs. This might signify good camping grounds, much water and game. On some stones I have found the branches are hanging from a horizontal line which generally bisects the stone near the middle and at times seems to consist of decorations on the edges of the stone. The horizontal line is used in many pottery designs and in petroglyphs and pictographs, also. Small stone fetishes to be hung around the neck were also incised with these lines.

Photographer Leslie Payne and I have found most of the stones in our collection (now on display at the Eastern California Museum in Independence) in zones ranging in elevation from sea level to 5,000 feet. I have had my best luck located them in sand dunes or near cooking areas called mescal pits. Yet many of the stones found in these areas display a pine tree design. Judging from the campsites, pot shards, flake debris and tools found, I would say these stones were incised anywhere from 200 to 2,000 years ago in this part of Inyo County, California and Southern Nevada.

I have convinced myself that the people who left these stones were great travelers or nomads who, upon arriving in our area, had to adapt themselves to the hunting of small game, seed gathering and collecting roots. This transition from people who were late arrivals on the scene took no more than a few hundred years, yet they retained by heritage the knowledge handed down for thousands of years concerning these strange and mysterious stones making it possible for people today to glimpse a bit of our forgotten past.

One of the few facts agreed upon by most experts is that the incising must have been done with crude needle-pointed tools fashioned from quartz called burrins.

There is a deep note of pathos in the ceaseless struggles and failures of the races to hand down their records through the ages to other peoples. Their efforts should at least be spared, if not permanently preserved. That day may come to pass when our own elaborate chronicles, though written in enduring letters of silver, bronz, and a thousand other media, shall be as mysterious to our successors on this world as we find the messages of the ancient Indians. These relics of prehistoric California and Nevada are trying to speak to us, if only we could understand. □

LONE PINE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SERVING SOUTHERN INYO COUNTY
FROM MT. WHITNEY TO DEATH VALLEY

"GATEWAY TO DEATH VALLEY

For Information On Southern Inyo County —
LONE PINE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
126 South Main Street o Lone Pine, CA 93545
Telephone: (619) 876-4444

J&R CLOTHING

THE FAMILY STORE
WITH SOMETHING
FOR EVERYONE!

OUTDOOR SPORTSWEAR

201 North Main Street
Lone Pine, CA 93545
(619) 876-5005
Joe & Ruby

GIFTS FLOWERS
CRAFTS
NURSERY
TUXEDO RENTALS

107 North Main Street
Lone Pine, CA 93545
(619) 876-4244

CUSTOM FRAMING

HIGH SIERRA MARKET

BEER • WINE
SOFT DRINKS
SANDWICHES
Full Line of Groceries
and Produce

1103 South Main Street
Lone Pine, CA 93545
(619) 876-5519

TEXACO

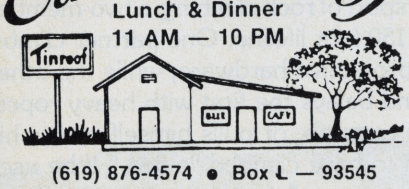
DON'S SERVICE CENTER
24 HOUR TOWING
NATIONAL AUTO CLUB

PHONE 876-4415
840 SOUTH MAIN,
LONE PINE, CA. 93545

U-HAUL

Ernie's Tinroof

Lunch & Dinner
11 AM — 10 PM



(619) 876-4574 • Box L — 93545
Camping at Diaz Lake
LONE PINE, CALIFORNIA

See Death Valley & Mt. Whitney
During Your Stay With Us!

Trails Motel

Solar Heated Pool o Direct Dial Phones
Color TV - Movie Channel
Air Conditioning
In Room Coffee

Highway 395/P.O. Box 65
Lone Pine, CA 93545/(619) 876-5555

Lone Pine Auto Care
COMPLETE ONE-STOP SERVICE

- AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSIONS
- ON-BOARD COMPUTERS
- MOTOR HOME REPAIRS
  All Major Repairs

1506 S. Main St. • Lone Pine
(619) 876-4600

SIERRA PROFILE

ROCK STAR

There are no screaming crowds when this Rock Star performs. He is alone on the face of a sheer granite rock, and only he knows the next step to his dance. His name is John Bachar.

by Steve Boga

photographs by Doug Robinson

On a soon-to-be-hot September morning in Yosemite Valley, free soloist John Bachar laces on his climbing boots and stares intently at the sheer granite wall that towers before him. He closes his eyes and pictures himself climbing one of its 250-foot vertical routes, the one called "Crack-A-Go-Go." Its polished surface is marred only by a few tiny irregularities and two thumb-wide vertical cracks.

The difference between Bachar and countless souls who have preceded him is that after Bachar is finished picturing himself climbing Crack-A-Go-Go, he'll do it. He's done it before, maybe 100 times. Alone. Without ropes or hardware or the old-fashioned camaraderie of a partner. What he does is called free soloing, and he's the best in the world at it.

He straps on his equipment: a bag of grip enhancing gymnastic chalk and a well-worn toothbrush for cleaning holds. That's all. That and a lot of courage, talent and determination.

He stands and stretches, not stiffly but slowly, carefully. Wearing only baggy white shorts and no shirt, he has a body worthy of the world's best rock climber. Tanned from countless hours on the rock, it ripples with definition. Although listed as 5'11" and 160 pounds, he appears smaller, almost thin. He carries no excess weight for, as everyone agrees, John Bachar travels light.

Slowly, with the grace of a lynx, he moves to the rock. Reaching into his bag, he dusts his hands, turning them as white as a mime's. He places one hand, then the other, on the rock, his finger joints tensing, swelling to fill the crack. "Finger jam" in place, he lifts his right leg above his head, fitting his heel into a postage stamp-sized depression in the rock. With less effort than most people expend getting out of bed, he lifts himself off the ground and onto the granite, moving from the horizontal world to the vertical . . . equally at home in both.

Rock climbing predates man's use of tools, but it wasn't until the 20th Century that climbing became a sport. Mountaineers climbed rocks only when they couldn't go around them, and then without relish. As equipment improved, making virtually every mountain in the world climbable, many mountaineers sought new challenges in rock climbing. Their focus shifted from the Destination to the Dance.

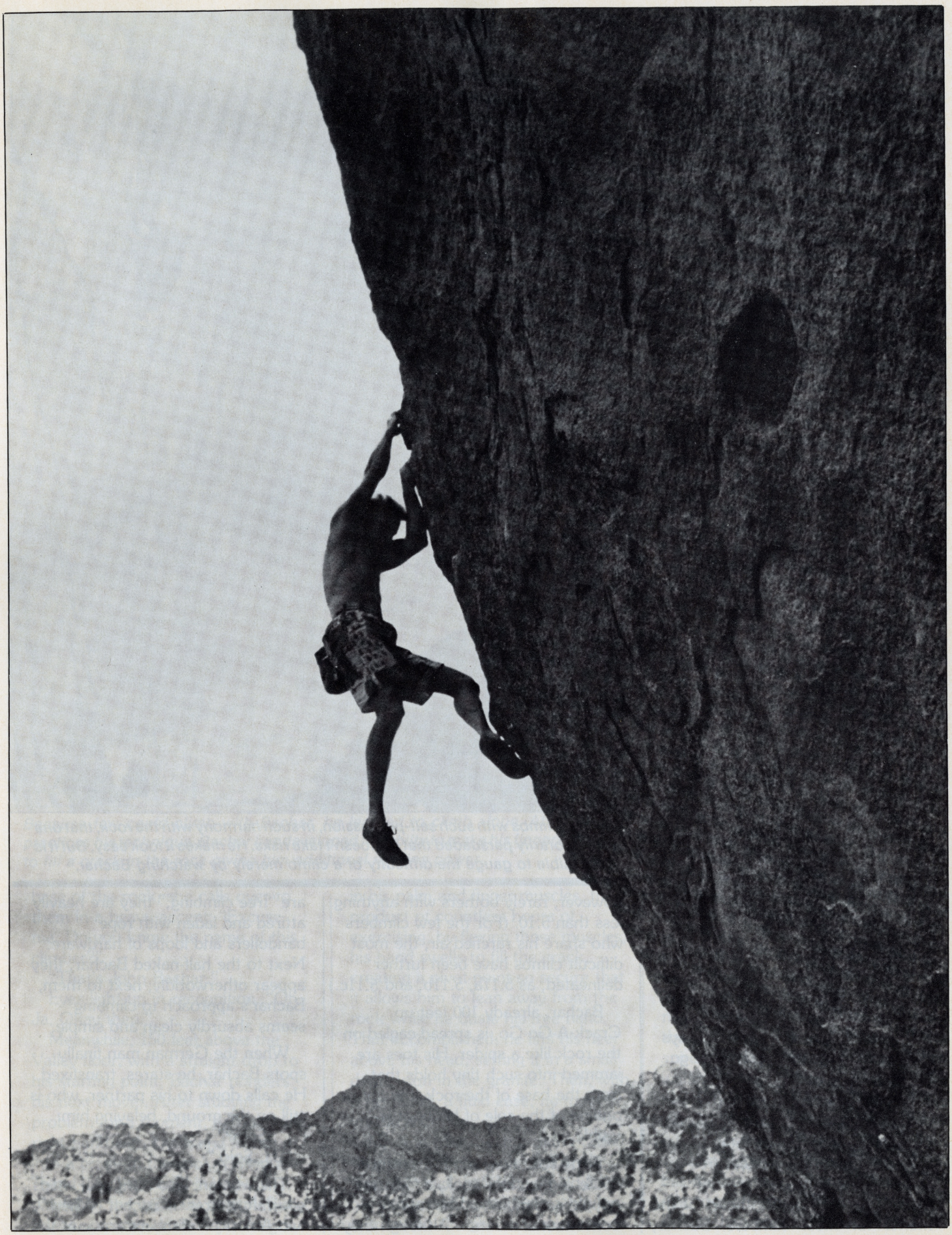
The revolutionary changes in climbing have come about once a decade:

In the 1940s came the nylon rope.
In the 1950s came the steel piton.
In the 1960s came the chockstone.
In the 1970s came John Bachar.

In the conventional sport of rock climbing, a two-member team is joined by a 150-foot lifeline. One partner climbs, pounding in the protective hardware, while the other anchors to a rock and belays the first with heavy ropes.

If a climber rests on, or pulls himself up by, his equipment, he is said to have climbed "aided." If he uses his equipment only as a safety net, he is said to have climbed "free." If he leaves behind his rope, hardware

continued on page 26



and partner, he is said to have "free soloed." And if he free solos an extremely difficult climb — say, a 5.11c, like Crack-A-Go-Go — he is said, in some circles, to be crazy or to have a death wish.

Bachar, who has heard it all, is not amused. "I don't even listen anymore," he says. "If they were saying something intelligent, I might worry. Actually, I'm a conservative climber. Yeah, chicken. I'm always operating way below my level of ability. That's what I call the cushion. I hate feeling like I'm thrashing around up there. If I can't do it with control, I'll back off. In my own mind, I'm really a chicken."

No one privy to what Bachar does on a rock will buy that, but the man climbs with such self-possession, in such harmony with the rock, that one is temporarily persuaded that he doesn't take risks. Like all great performers, he makes it look easy. It is, in fact, impossible to gauge the difficulty of a route merely by watching Bachar solo it.

But, no risks?

"Look at the things I don't do," he says. "I don't climb frozen waterfalls. Or crumbly rock. In Yosemite, it's solid rock, good weather. And the more I do it, the better I get. The odds are always with me."

According to Bachar, free soloing is the most popular participant sport in the world. "Everybody free solos. When you walk to the store, you're free soloing. It's just a matter of the difficulty of the route."

In the Yosemite decimal system, routes are classified as follows:

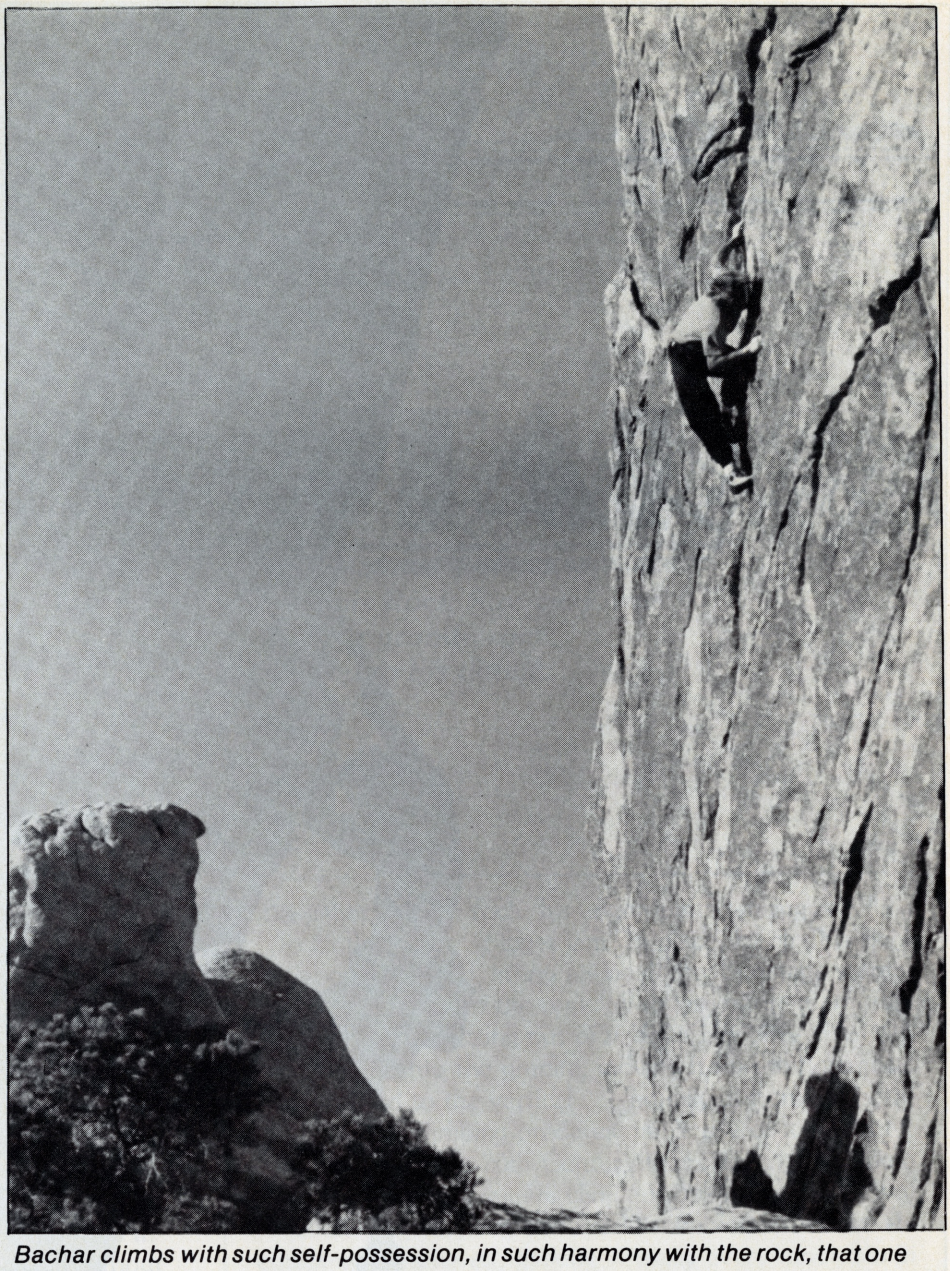
No. 1: A walk

No.2: Proper footwear required. ("Of course, that's ridiculous," says Bachar, "because the Nepalese go barefoot everywhere.")

No. 3: Ropes advised, not because the climb is so difficult, but because a fall would be fatal.

No. 4: Everyone - except free soloists - use ropes.

No. 5.0 to 5.13: The heart of the matter for most climbers. Bachar, however, rarely bothers with anything less than 5.10. (For the few climbers who share his rarefied air, the most difficult climbs have been further delineated, as 5.11a, 5.11b, and 5.11c.)



Bachar climbs with such self-possession, in such harmony with the rock, that one is temporarily persuaded that he doesn't take risks. He makes it look easy. But it is impossible to gauge the difficulty of a climb merely by watching Bachar.

Bachar, already 100 feet up Crack-A-Go-Go, is spread-eagled on the rock like a spider. His toes are jammed into such tiny holds that, from the base of the rock, the entire outline of the sole of his boot is visible.

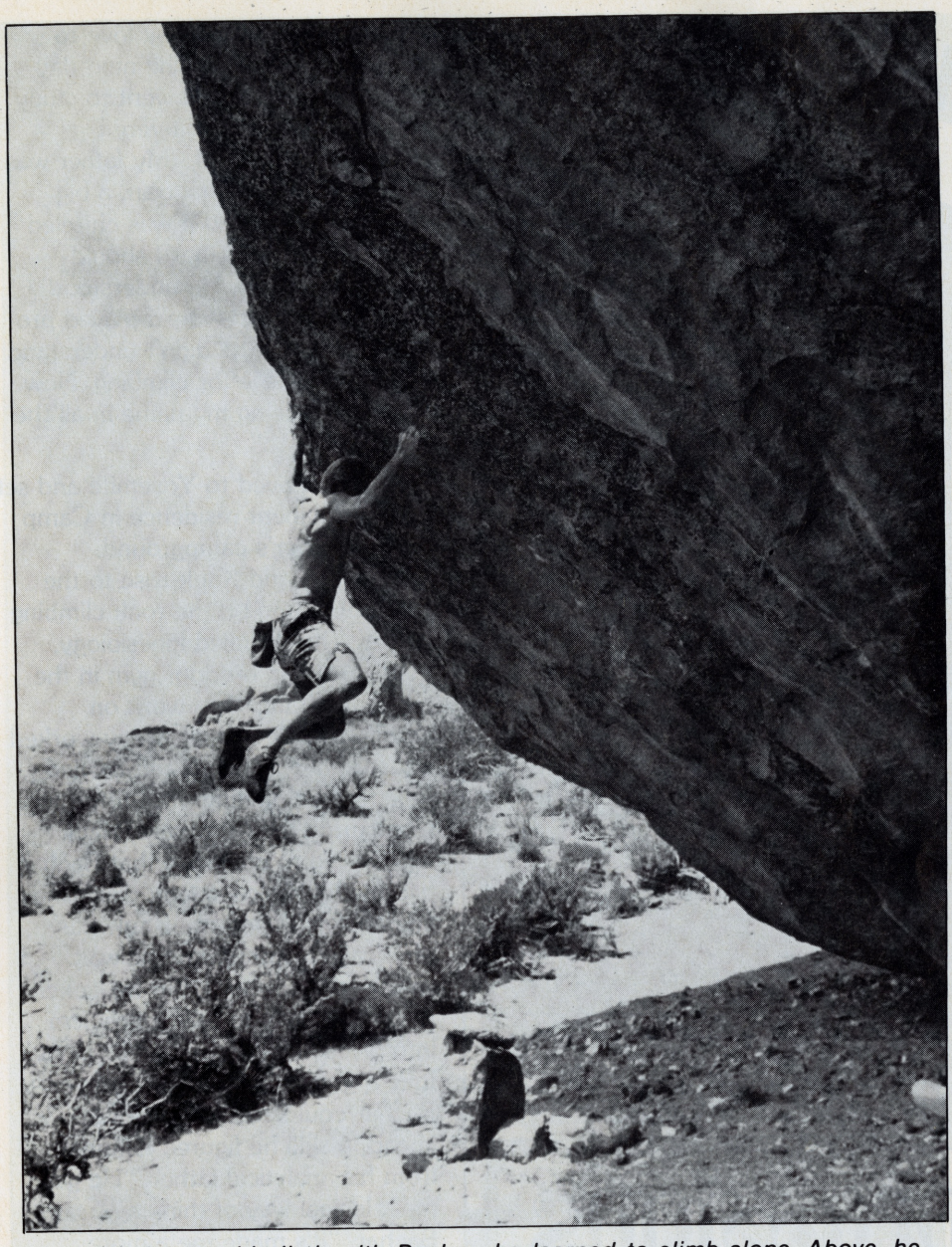
Forty feet away, on a different route of the same rock, a German couple is climbing in the more conventional manner. Although they are "free climbing," they are heavily attired and laden with rope bandoliers and loops of hardware. Next to the half-naked Bachar, they appear otherworldly; next to them, Bachar's approach to climbing seems absurdly clean and simple.

When the German man finally spots Bachar, he stares, transfixed. He calls down to his partner, who is still on the ground, belaying him:

". . . Solo?"

"Ja. Solo."

The woman, also intrigued, snaps several pictures of Bachar. When two American climbers arrive at the



Because few could climb with Bachar, he learned to climb alone. Above, he practices his technique. Bachar has developed the abilty to make his fingers swell to fill a crack in the rock giving him additional holding power.

base of the rock, she calls over to them in a heavy accent: "Excuse me. Do you know the name of this climber?"

"That's John Bachar."

Eyes light up in recognition. "Oh. Ja. Okay then."

Meanwhile, 150 feet above the Valley floor, with a straight drop to his starting point, Bachar ponders his next move.. After studying the problem for a moment, he dusts his right hand with chalk and forces it into a crack in the rock. Called a "hand-jam," the hold is brutally painful to the ordinary mortal. But Bachar has extraordinary strength in his palm and finger muscles, the product of countless hours of exercising; by flexing those muscles, his hand swells to fill the crack, creating a pivot-point so secure that it allows him to lean away from the rock while he dusts his free hand. That accomplished, he lifts his heel above his head, setting it in a small depression in the granite. Then, with a gentle lift, a fluid ease, he moves up the rock.

Mr. and Mrs. Bachar didn't raise their son to be a rock climber. It was assumed that John would follow his father and become a math whiz. It sounded all right to John, who played along with straight A's in high school math. Meanwhile, he was also an athlete, playing baseball, then giving that up for pole vaulting. "I tied the school record in practice," he remembers. "I dug vaulting. But by then I had discovered climbing. I started going to a climbing spot east of L.A., called Stony Point. By the time I was 16, I could do all its bouldering problems, something nobody else could claim."

By his senior year, he was cutting track practice to go climbing. "I started out cutting Wednesdays, which, with the weekend, gave me three days to climb. But it wasn't enough, so I started cutting Tuesdays and Thursdays . . ."

Because few could climb with John Bachar, he learned to climb alone. "I didn't have any friends in high school," he says with a trace of sadness. "I met a few people climbing — including Ron Kauk."

Kauk and Bachar were compatible on and off the rock. They were several levels better than anyone else, as though they played in a league all their own. When summer ended, Kauk coaxed Bachar to go to Yosemite with him, regaling him with stories of the Valley, "home of the best rock climbing in the world." But Bachar, not yet able to see the light, enrolled in math at U.C.L.A. Kauk moved to Yosemite and began free climbing new routes, making a name for himself.

During his freshman year, a distracted Bachar got a C in math. He was depressed and had to get out of L.A. The only rock he'd seen in months was in Japanese Tea Gardens. And Kauk's letters from Yosemite created a yearning he'd never felt before. "It is the best in the world!" he wrote. "Granite spires reaching for a blue sky, all waiting to be climbed by you and me. When you do a new route in Yosemite you get to name it. I've got thirteen already . . ."

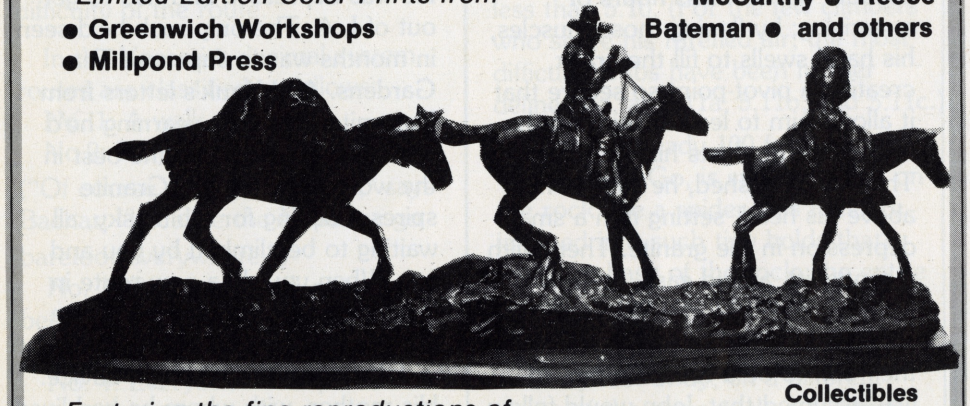
John, anguished, sought advice. His mother, with whom he had lived since his parents split up ten years before, had learned a thing or two

COTTONWOOD PLAZA
785 North Main Street
Bishop, CA 93514

The right combination for pictures of pride
Kodak Colorwatch™ System
WILSON'S FAST PHOTO
ONE HOUR PROCESSING
(619) 872-2345
INSIDE THRIFTY

IMPERIAL GOURMET
MANDARIN CHINESE CUSINE
SPECIALTIES
Dry Braised Shrimp
Kung Pao Chicken
Open Daily for Lunch & Dinner
Eat In or Take Home
872-1144

Grand Impressions GALLERY
(619) 873-6664
Authorized dealer of Limited Edition Color Prints from —
• Greenwich Workshops
• Millpond Press
Featuring the works of —
McCarthy • Reece
Bateman • and others



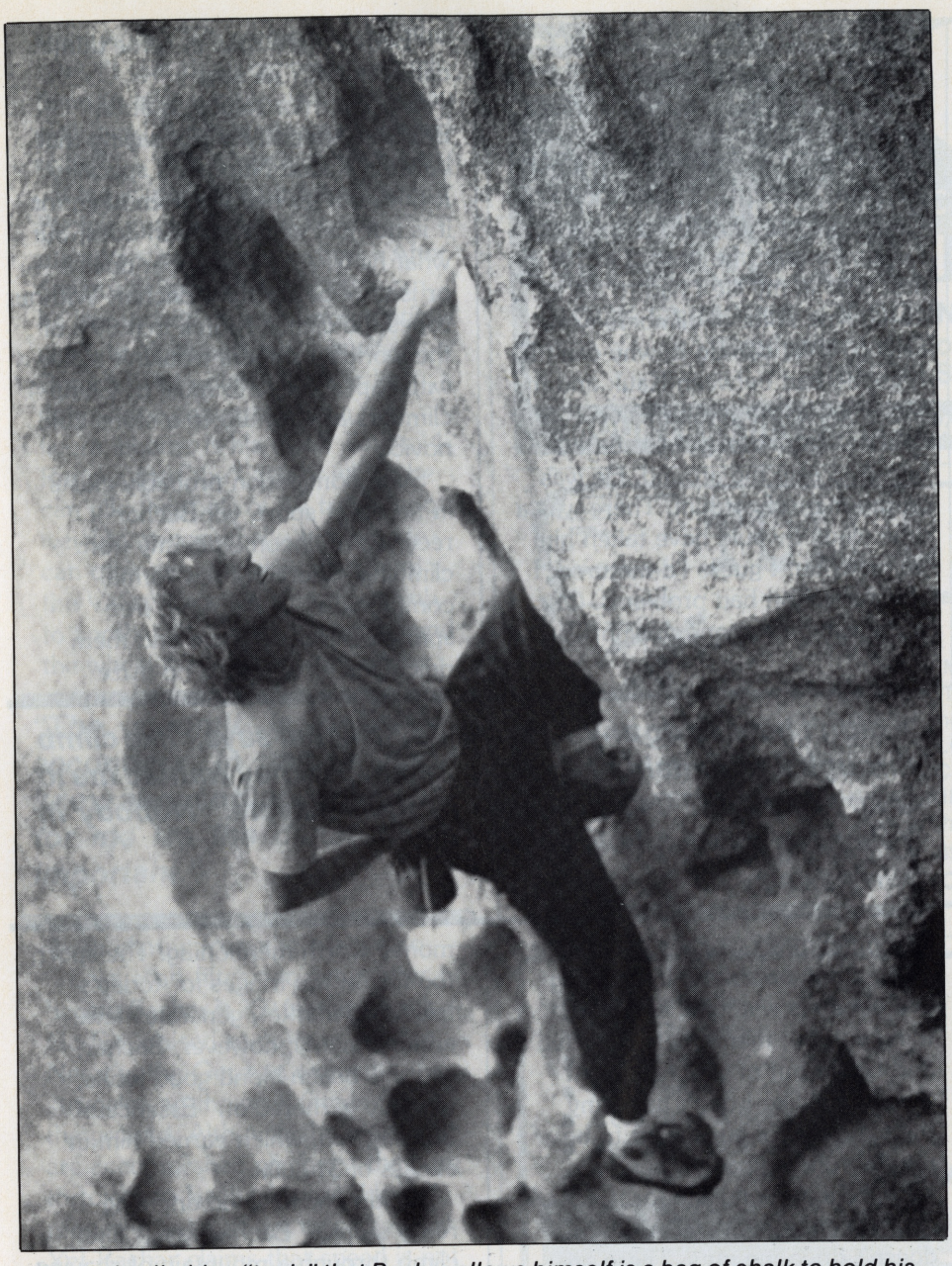
Featuring the fine reproductions of —
REMINGTON • RUSSEL • FRASER
Collectibles for the Sportsman

about life. "Do what you love to do," she counseled. The next day he quit U.C.L.A. and went to study in Yosemite. "It was a very big decision," he recalls. "My father was a foremost mathematician, a big shot professor, and it was chiseled in the family rock that I should follow that route. He understood athletics all right — he'd played pro baseball — but he didn't understand giving up college for climbing. Now he digs it, seeing my name in all the magazines . . ."

Bachar moved to Yosemite and set up a permanent residence in Camp 4, the climber's campground. Quickly, he and Kauk rose to the top of the rung on the rock climbing ladder. They studied kinesiology, then set up an outdoor gym in the middle of Camp 4 to work on certain muscle groups. They worked out together, climbed and partied together, competing in all three. Comparing their progress, Kauk was forced to conclude that Bachar had it all: physical talent, discipline, fine analytical powers. Kauk was physically talented, and he was willing to work hard, but he lacked Bachar's ability to tear a problem into pieces and look at all its parts. Like a grand master chess player, Bachar could see many moves ahead, a skill he figured he inherited from his analytical father. "He gave me a logical way of thinking," says Bachar. "It's made me a more thorough thinker."

When he was 19, Bachar became the first person to free solo a 5.11 climb — Yosemite's 400-foot New Dimensions. It was a climb that had severely tested the mettle of the world's best two-man teams, and when word reached Camp 4 that he had free soloed it, the other climbers were stunned. The following day, a notice appeared on the camp bulletin board: "Tell Webster to change the meaning of insanity to *John Bachar free soloing New Dimensions*!"

Bachar remembers the furor. "I didn't tell anybody. Word just spread, but it was weird — nobody would talk to me about it. I could hear them whispering behind my



The only climbing "tools" that Bachar allows himself is a bag of chalk to hold his grip, and his climbing boots. He works out daily in a gym he designed himself.

back: "There goes John Bachar . . . He soloed New Dimensions. Nobody understood it."

It didn't get any easier for Bachar. He further ostracized himself when he became the only person to solo a 5.11c route called Butterballs, which had not long before been listed in the the Guiness as the world's most difficult roped climb. Then he did an "on-sight" (first ascent for that climber) free solo of Moratorium, a 5.11b and, as such, the hardest "on-sight" free solo ever. "On-sight is really the big leagues," say Bachar. "Not knowing what's up there makes all the difference in the world. Climbing Moratorium, I got too close to my limits and it didn't feel good. I didn't have that extra padding of security. I've only had a bad feeling on a couple of solos, but that was one of them."

Competitive tension between Kauk and Bachar intensified when Bachar was asked to do a TV commercial for 7-Up. It escalated when Bachar discovered that an obscure Spanish climbing boot, the Fire (pronounced "Fee-Ray") was far superior on Yosemite rock and started the *Sole Survivor Corporation* to exclusively import the boot. The last straw was

Specialty
Outdoor Clothing
& Equipment
Backpacking
& XC Skiing Rentals

SONORA MOUNTAINEERING
173 South Washington Street
Sonora, California 95370
(209) 532-5621

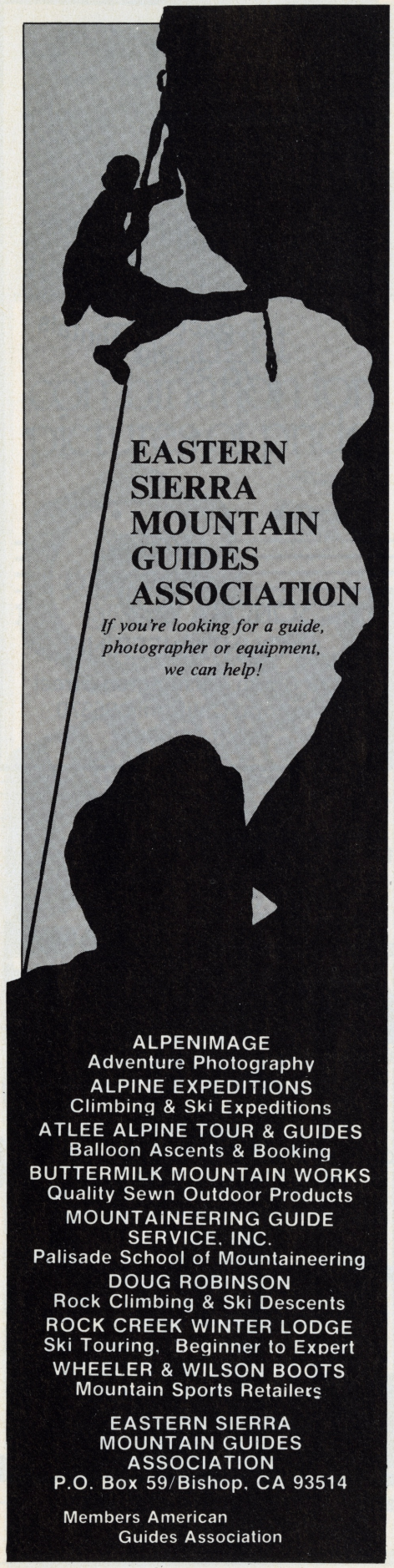
- *XC Ski Equipment*
- *Climbing Equipment*
- *Clothing*
- *Boot Repair*

Wheeler and Wilson
Mountain Sports Specialists

206 North Main St.
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-7520
Send us your boots for Expert Repair Work!

And NOW LOCATED
Village Center West
Mammoth Lakes, CA
(619) 934-3773

patagonia



Bachar's installing himself as vice president in charge of testing the boots (i.e. climbing in them) with a salary of $60,000.

Say Bachar: "The jealousy among climbers is intense. I wasn't living in Camp 4 and eating beans anymore. I wasn't one of the boys. For the first time in my life I had to file a 1040 form. A lot of climbers were asking, 'If he can do it, why can't I?' It got so bad between Kauk and me that one day he took offense at something he thought I said and began to slap me around. He was daring me to fight him. There was a time when I would have taken him up on it, but I guess I'd matured. I could see Ron had problems. Our relationship has gone downhill since then."

"Better there than in some dumb car accident," he says.

Say that free soloing is John Bachar's specialty is like saying that ballet is Rudolf Nureyev's specialty. It does not go nearly far enough, for it is not just what the man does, but what he is. And no climber does it — or is it — better than Bachar. Without ropes, he climbs routes that 99% of the world's climbers wouldn't tackle with ropes. He is to most of Camp 4 climbers as they are to a stone cold novice.

Such domination probably exists in no other sport, yet Bachar receives no income directly from climbing. There are few formal competitions — the more free-spirited climbers would find them ridiculous — and thus no prize money worth mentioning. The sport, too far on the fringes for today's television market, generates few endorsements; however, Bachar, with his beach-blond good looks, recently garnered an "Essence of Shaving" ad, which earned him in excess of $10,000.

"I didn't have to do anything stupid," Bachar says, "like climb through a mountain of shaving cream. But they wanted me to wear a helmet." He grimaces at their naivete. "Nobody in Yosemite wears a helmet . . ."

"Sometimes I wonder why I ever wanted any notoriety. In climbing everybody is watching every little thing you do; then it gets reported and blown out of proportion. At times I feel like I don't have any friends. A lot of guys want to be number one so badly, they'll sacrifice any friendship for it. It's sad. I'm competitive, sure, but it doesn't drive me nuts. There are only two guys in the world who have impressed me with their climbing ability — Jerry Moffatt and Ron Kauk — and on certain days they can do things with their bodies that I can't do, and vice versa. That's all right, I learn from that. So many guys burn out and quit. They can't love the sport very much if they quit so easily, can they?"

Bachar certainly loves it. He intends to climb until he dies, and while the force raging within him is much more a life wish than a death wish, he willingly accepts the possibility of the end coming while he is climbing in what he calls Zone 3, which means quite simply, "If you fall, you die."

"I didn't have to do anything really stupid," Bachar says, "like climb through a mountain of shaving cream. But they wanted me to wear a helmet." He grimaces at their naivete. "Nobody in Yosemite wears a helmet. Then they didn't like my voice and dubbed in somebody else. At least they let me free solo." Bachar has appeared on "That's Incredible," "Real People" and "Evening Magazine." He finished third in a "Survival of the Fittest" contest, earning $5,000 and wiping out the competition in the Stick Fighting event. "It took place on a swinging bridge," he remembers. "Most of the other guys couldn't even walk across it. I could jog across it. I do well in the balance tests."

Sometimes the movies call him for

stunt work. "They come to me," he says. "I give them my price and tell them to take it or leave it. They pay well, but I don't need money. I need rock."

One is inclined to believe him, for Bachar appears not to have a materialistic bone in his body. After 6 years of living in a tent or a van, he has moved into an unpretentious cabin in Yosemite with his wife, Brenda. The couple owns little. John's one concession to a five-figure income is his black Toyota 4-Runner, into the back of which he can pile the tools of his trade: boots, weights, ropes, chalk, bicycle. He can often be seen driving around the Valley, moving from one climb to another, less circumspect behind the wheel than on the rock, Peter

"The summit is definitely secondary to me. I don't know about other people, but for me it's the dance that's important."

Tosh blaring from the car stereo.

Less than fifteen minutes after he began, Bachar is 250 feet up Crack-A-Go-Go, poised to go over the top. Nearby, the German woman struggles on the wall, fifteen feet off the ground. Although the Germans are accomplished climbers, they are tortoises to Bachar's hare. He will require one-tenth the time they will. Yet Bachar claims that speed is not his main concern; rather it is the by-product of his perfect solo technique. "The summit is definitely secondary to me. I don't know about other people, but for me it's the dance that's important. The quality of the movements, like in Tai Chi. Or diving off a 10-meter board. Lots of people can dive from that high, but how many can do it with grace and control?"

Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that Bachar is proud of his quickness. "Some mornings I'll do Crack-A-Go-Go and Hardd (another 5.11), then go down to Arch Rock and do New Dimensions. When I come back, the roped climbers are still on their first ascent. It saves a

IN MAMMOTH LAKES, CA . . .

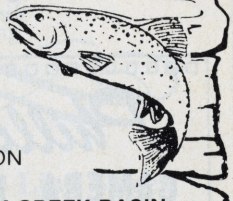
THE LOCAL MOUNTAIN SHOP

ROCK CLIMBING • X-COUNTRY SKIING • BACKPACKING
Equipment • Clothing • Accessories
RENTALS AVAILABLE

MOUNTAIN BLVD. OFF MAIN STREET • (619) 934-4011

TOM'S SINCE 1917 PLACE

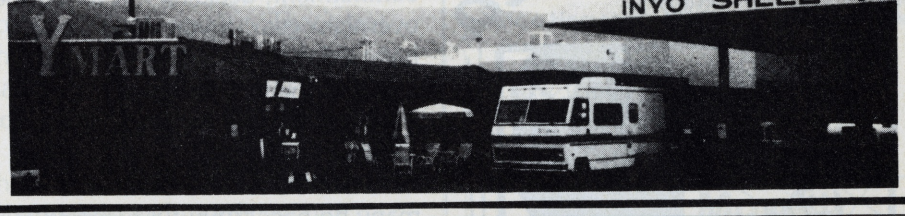
Your Hosts: Gary & Leslie Huffaker



A COMPLETE YEAR ROUND RESORT
— FAMILY DINING —
BREAKFAST • LUNCH • DINNER
TAVERN and OFF SALE LIQUOR
GROCERIES • LODGING • GAS STATION
FISHING TACKLE • LICENSES • ICE
GATEWAY TO X-COUNTRY SKIING & FISHING in ROCK CREEK BASIN
Located in the Inyo National Forest
On U.S. Highway 395 - 25 Miles North of Bishop
FOR RESERVATIONS PHONE: (619) 935-4239

- RV Dumpsite
- Shell Gasoline
- Diesel Fuel
- Mini-Mart
- Cold Beer & Soda
- Sandwiches & Magazines
- T-Shirts & Caps

Shell
Y • Mart
AT THE NORTH END OF BISHOP
Mammoth Mart
HIGHWAY 203 — OLD MAMMOTH ROAD



Best Western®
WORLDWIDE LODGING

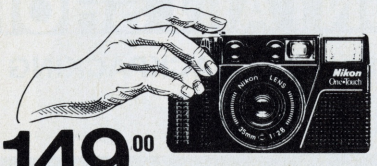
FRONTIER MOTEL
Direct—Dail Phones
Color TV
Heated Pool
In-Room Coffee
1008 S. Main St.
Lone Pine, CA 93545
(619) 876-5571

WESTERNER MOTEL
55Guest Rooms and Suites
Conference Facilties for 45
Pool
In-Room Coffee
150 Elm Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-3564

HOLIDAY SPA LODGE
Direct-Dail Phones
Spa Pool/Color TV
Free In-Room Brewed Coffee
Seasonal Rates!
1025 N. Main St.
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-3543

CALL TOLL FREE FOR RESERVATIONS: 1 (800) 528-1234

Nikon puts great 35mm photography at everybody's fingertips.



$149.00

Get your hands on a One•Touch.

Includes Nikon Inc. Limited Warranty

Nikon
We take the world's greatest pictures.

Phillips
CAMERA HOUSE

RITZ CAMERA AFFILIATE

186 N. Main St.
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 872-4211

lot of time not having to put in and take out hardware."

One particular Yosemite climb offers evidence of just how segregated Bachar is from the climbing masses. The guide books say that Fairview Dome, a 1,200-foot vertical ascent at Tuolumne Meadows is a 5-8 hour round trip for a roped party of two. Bachar, who uses it as a workout, has done it in 39 minutes.

There are times when Bachar, abandoning purism, just straps on the equipment and goes for the record. Last year he and his climbing buddy, Rick Cashner, shattered the world record for an ascent of El Capitan, the 3,200-foot-high monolith reputed to be the largest piece of granite in the world.

sport. To the freewheeling climbers, rangers are mainstream Establishment, wilderness cops; as such, they are viewed with the same sort of disdain shown, say, a climber who tackles a boulder with ropes.

Bachar's relationship with the rangers is more aloof than tense. "They think I'm crazy, but they can't stop me from doing what I'm doing," he says with rising inflection. "They've stopped people from hang gliding and parachuting off El Cap, from kayaking the Merced River . . . but they can't stop me."

One pictures John Bachar, in tights and cape, leaping from rock to rock, laughing in the face of the law. Except that laughing doesn't come easy to Bachar. Still, he has

He recalls the time he had to convince a ranger that he was adequately equipped to climb at Big Rock. Showing him a spatula, he told the ranger it was a 'crack-jack,' an important climbing tool. He was waved through before he could produce his 'inverted storm detector,' a garden fork.

"We summitted in 9 hours and 27 minutes, using any aid that would get us to the top faster. I don't usually worry about the clock, but I'd climbed El Cap seven times before it seemed like the time to go for the record. It's a big commitment, deciding not to lug the overnight gear. If you don't make it before dark, you spend a rough night on the wall."

The way some keep score in climbing is to count "first ascents," but Bachar isn't even sure how many he has. "About a hundred in Yosemite, I guess. That's not all that many, but they've all been fairly difficult."

The willingness of climbers to flout gravity has led them into inevitable conflict with the Park Service, which is responsible for retrieving the battered bodies of the fallen. Of the 100 or so Search and Rescue missions in Yosemite each year, at least twenty involve climbers. To the park rangers, free soloists like John Bachar are the lunatic fringe of an already tricky

had a smile or two at the expense of the rangers. He recalls the time he had to convince one at Big Rock, in Southern California, that he was adequately equipped to climb in the park. Showing him a spatula, he told him it was a "crack-jack," an important climbing tool. He was waved through before he could produce his "inverted storm detector," a garden fork.

Yosemite's chief ranger, Bill Wendt, finds little humor in the Park's relations with climbers. It's difficult not to think of them as, well, riffraff. After all, they have caused more than their share of problems, from shoplifting in the Village store to falling off mountains. But Wendt is concerned with more than the welfare of a few climbers who are a burr in the side of the Park Service. He worries about the dangerous example they set for others. He once halted a television shoot of Bachar and Kauk until assurances were given that the program would carry a safety message. "It's too easy to copy

Jewelry By Wilhelmina

CUSTOM DESIGNING
JEWELRY REPAIR
CHAINS/CHARMS/EARRINGS
PENDANTS/GEMSTONES

COTTONWOOD PLAZA
787 North Main Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 872-2053

someone on TV," he said. "Anyone attempting to free solo should realize that Bachar and Kauk are at the Olympic level."

Does Bachar worry about leading, by example, the novitiate climber to his doom? "No way. Free soloing has a built-in safety device. Someone who doesn't know what he's doing isn't going to get very far up a 5.11 climb. It's not going to happen. The novice will drop out long before Zone 3."

Climbing statistics support such a contention. Of the approximately 850 mountaineering and rock climbing fatalities in the United States from 1951 to 1984, only one was the result of a free solo rock climbing fall.

Others have come close. Bachar's pal, Rick Cashner, has twice fallen more than 30 feet and lived. "The average climber will die if he falls more than 47 feet," Bachar explains. "But 30 feet can do a lot of damage. Rick's a tough guy. He's broken a few bones, lost a few teeth, but he's still a climber. That's the way it is — real climbers do it for life. The second time Rick fell, he knocked out his front teeth and gashed his eyebrow pretty bad. A ranger scrambled up to him and found blood spurting from his brow. He thought it was coming from Rick's eye and fainted, hitting his head on a rock and knocking himself out. So Rick had to hike out to get help for the ranger. Like I said, he's a tough guy."

Bachar has taken only one serious fall. On a difficult solo in Colorado's Eldorado Springs Canyon, he tumbled 20 feet. His amazing balance allowed him to land right side up, but a dislodged rock knocked him down, badly bruising his back. After standing up, Bachar fainted, then revived and drove himself home. He, too, is a tough guy.

But even tough guys possess a realistic fear of falling. For climbers — particularly free soloists — it comes with the territory. The irony is that the fear itself — a supposedly self-protective emotion — can disrupt concentration and short-circuit skill. A climber can die as a direct result of being afraid to die.

How does Bachar deal with fear?

"It forces me to concentrate. I zoom right in. But it's a relaxed sort of concentration. I get so into doing each movement — with grace and control — that it makes no difference whether I'm fifty feet up or five. If I think about falling, I can't put my energy into doing the moves."

"I accept the consequences of all that I do. No matter what we do with our lives, our bodies are temporary. We're all going to die, and I'd rather die climbing than doing anything else."

"You hear people say you shouldn't look down, but I look down all the time. I dig it. It's beautiful up there." Bachar reflects a moment. "People are obsessed with the dangers of soloing, but what they don't realize is that just about every move is reversible. If it's too hard, I can undo it. That's not the case with, say, speed skiing or hang gliding. In those sports, once you've started, you're committed."

"I accept the consequences of all that I do," he adds. "No matter what we do with our lives, our bodies are temporary. We're all going to die, and I'd rather die climbing than doing anything else."

For John Bachar, a shy smile is usually maximum evidence of amusement. He displays that smile, and his remarkable attitude toward falling, whenever he is asked for a climbing anecdote: "A guy was doing Reed's Direct, a 5.9 climb here in Yosemite. Not only was he tied in, but he had a drag line for hauling up equipment. From 150 feet up, he fell. But he had tied into

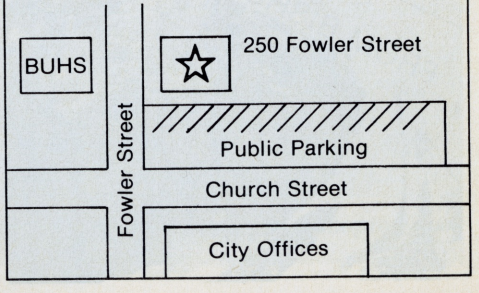
Dwayne's friendly pharmacy

Prescriptions
Gifts
Cosmetics
Hallmark Shop

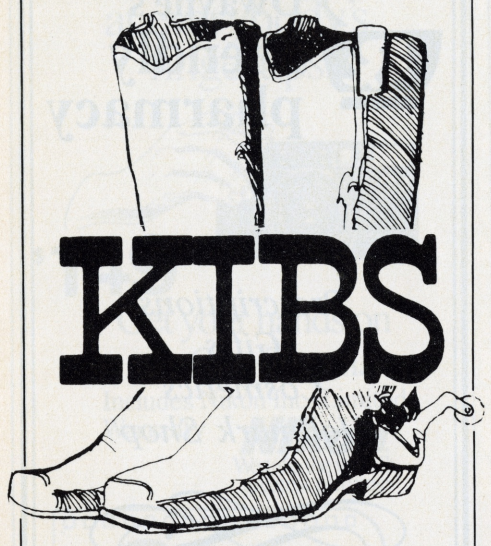
568 West Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 872-2522

FARMERS INSURANCE GROUP
Symbol of Superior Service
Auto • Homeowners • Commercial • Truck
Fred Henke
Agent
(619) 872-1728

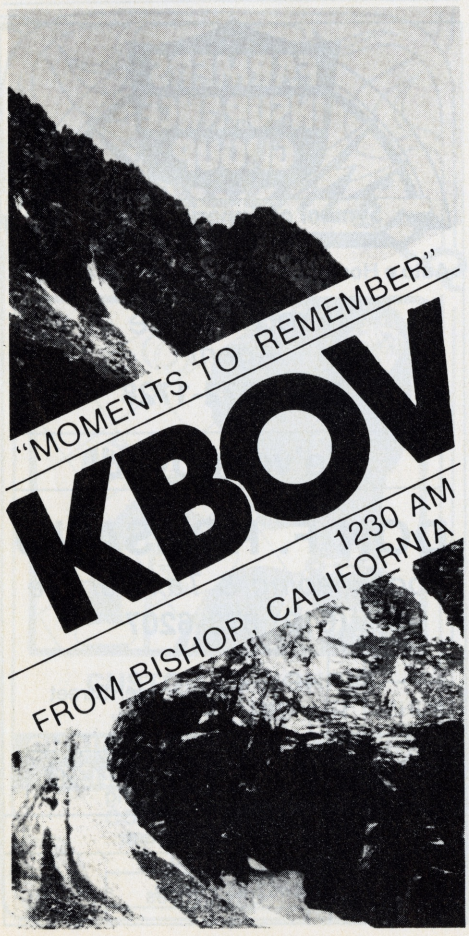
We've Moved!
DON F. ROSSANO
Bookkeeping & Tax Service
(619) 873-6207



The Greatest Country in the World



LONE PINE 95.9 FM
TONOPAH 101.7 FM
RIDGECREST 100.9FM
BRIDGEPORT 100.1 FM



his harness wrong and the rope ripped apart the harness, and now he's doing the death fall. He's history, except that his drag line wrapped around a tree on the wall, caught, and stopped him five feet above the ground." Again there is that shy smile. "He was doing the death fall and he lucked out. Most people don't even have a drag line on that climb. After that, he sold all his equipment and quit climbing. That one is pretty funny . . ."

Bachar's standards, as high as the walls he climbs, force him to question even his own methods. "I'm not as free as I could be," he says. "I use boots and chalk. If I was truly one with the rock, I'd use neither. But the chalk is organic, and climbing barefoot thrashes your feet . . ." Again there is a hint of that smile. ". . . and I'm not into pain."

One of climbing's main attractions is the exhilarating freedom it offers its participants. As there is no rule book, a climber is allowed to ascend a route employing any or all of the available hardware — unless, of course, he wants the respect of John Bachar.

"Someone says they did this 5.11a or that 5.11c, but how do you know? They write into an editor of some climbing magazine, what does that prove? Besides, with artificial aid, anybody can climb anything. It's about as challenging, as meaningful, as a repairman going up a telephone pole."

It's impossible to talk climbing with Bachar without talking ethics. For him, the two are inseparable. "Only in the last fifteen years have climbers quit a route because it couldn't be done unaided. In the past, if that happened, the party would just bolt up and go for the summit. Now the real purists figure if it can't be done right, it shouldn't be done at all."

Count Bachar among the real purists. A few years back he was invited to a climbing conference in Germany, one purpose of which was to discuss the ethics of climbing. "I thought it was going to be great," he says, shaking his head in disgust. "They paid my way there, which is unheard of. They had over 5,000 people in attendance, which is also unheard of. Here we'd have maybe 500. In Europe, climbers are revered as stars. In America I never get asked for my autograph, but the first day in Germany I signed about 300. Unfortunately, the discussions on ethics turned out to be bogus bullshit. They're just missing the point. They see nothing wrong with starting out at the top and putting protection so you can climb safely from the bottom. Seems to me that's like getting a copy of the final exam before the exam."

Bachar's standards, as high as the walls he climbs, force him to question even his own methods. "I'm not as free as I could be," he says shamefully. "I use boots and chalk. If I was truly one with the rock, I'd use neither. But the chalk is organic; and climbing barefoot thrashes your feet . . ." Again there is a hint of that smile. ". . . and I'm not into pain."

Returning from the top of Crack-A-Go-Go, Bachar scampers down a dirt trail next to the rock, displaying his characteristic grace and coordination. He removes his climbing boots and puts on his beat-up Nike tennis shoes. Carrying his boots in one hand and his pouch of chalk in the other, he walks back to his Toyota, taking a route

dominated by huge slippery granite boulders. In love with the world he inhabits, he prances over the rocks.

Thirty minutes later, after a short lunch break of grapes and an apple, he is in Camp 4, staring at quite a different boulder. Thirty feet high, it has a name — "Midnight Lightning," a "problem" (bouldering, a legitimate rock climbing subsport, calls its challenges "problems"), and a history. For years, climbers passed beneath its overhang, dismissing it as unclimbable; but in the mid-seventies a denizen of Camp 4, his acuity sharpened by LSD, declared that he could see the solution. His vision was received as divine revelation in Camp 4, and some of the world's best climbers came to try to solve the problem of Midnight Lightning. Although that was over a decade ago, only seven have succeeded. Ron Kauk was the first, John Bachar the second. Bachar has continued to do it as a regular part of his workout. "I've probably done Midnight Lightning 300 times."

Not today. This time the "steel hooks" weaken, the hand slips and he drops ten feet, landing on the ground with a surprisingly heavy thud. Surprising because, up to then, he had seemed lighter than air. He sits for a moment, collecting his breath, contemplating his mistake. Finally he gets to his feet, saying, "First time I've fallen on this one in over a month. That's enough for today . . . I'll finish the workout at the gym . . ."

Bachar's workout, which he does four days a week, is so strenuous that most people can't bear to watch him go through it. First, 2-3 hours soloing 5.11 climbs; then bouldering behind Camp 4 for a couple of hours, usually finishing with an ascent on Midnight Lightning; then exercising in his outdoor gymnasium until dark.

"I built the gym myself in Rick Cashner's backyard when the one in Camp 4 became too much of a tourist trap. It got to the point where crowds were gathering just to watch me work out. Guys smoking cigarettes . . . it drove me crazy. Most people would rather watch somebody else work out than work out themselves."

Among the gear Bachar has rigged there is a 2"x 8" board nailed between two pine trees. Attached to the board are tiny blocks of wood that provide tiny holds for one-armed fingertip pullups. The Guiness Book of World Records says that only one person in 100,000 can do a one-armed pull up. Bachar regularly does one-armed fingertip pullups — with barbell weights dangling from a harness around his waist!

"I do more than is necessary," he says, in between breaths. "That's my cushion. I want to be stronger than I'll ever need up on the rock. It's not just making it to the top; it's making it with control. There's no satisfaction in thrashing around and just barely making it. You can fool other people, but you can't fool yourself."

Bachar wants to be stronger, and better balanced. After several sets of pullups, he moves over to his "slack chain," which is strung between two trees. He hops up on the chain and proceeds to tiptoe from one end to the other, like a deft tightrope walker. "Besides balance, the chain tests concentration and relaxation," he says. "You gotta relax or it will throw you around."

Next he moves to the "crack machine," a long board with a built-in slot, for practicing "hand-jams." Then back for more pullups.

"The only people who really do one-armed pullups are climbers. They aren't very good pressers, but they're usually great pullers. There are plenty of climbers who are stronger than me in the gym, but they can't always do it on the rock. Strength isn't everything. There's a woman here in Yosemite, one of the five best female climbers in the world. Not particularly strong, but great at solving climbing problems."

Working from power to endurance, Bachar moves to another piece of equipment, a personal invention of his called the Bachar Ladder. Tied to the top of a

continued on page 59

The RACCOON

The Sierra's Only "Washing Bear"

Text and photo
by Mike McWherter

The word *raccoon* comes to us from the American Indians who had a similar sounding word which meant "he who scratches with his hands." The word was common in the Indian language of Algonquin which was spoken from Labrador to Carolina and westward to the Great Plains. Tribes which spoke Algonquin included the Cree, Shawnee, Blackfoot and Cheyenne.

The raccoon's scratching, searching, and seizing of food near the edges of lakes and streams has led many to believe that it is actually washing its food. In fact, the German name for raccoon, *Waschbac*, means *washing bear*. But is this behavior really washing?

The forepaws of raccoons are the most sensitive tactile organs of any mammal. Each finger has its own special highly developed nerve center in the raccoon's brain. Their sensitive touch is used in searching for prey in shallow bodies of water. They are naturally inquisitive and use the excellent dexterity of their paws to investigate everything that attracts their curiosity. As the raccoon searches, it looks off in different directions in an inquiring manner. When food is found, it is siezed. Even though food has been found the raccoon will continue to act out the "search and seizure" trait, and if near water, appear to be washing its food.

Like mountain lions and bears, raccoons are in the Carnivora order of mammals, so named because of their meat eating habits. However, raccoons will feed on almost anything — plant or animal. Their diet is even more varied than that of bears and may include small birds, eggs, fish, mice, insects, earthworms, rabbits, reptiles, frogs, crayfish, mussels, oysters, nuts, and fruits.

The scientific name for the raccoon commonly seen in the Sierra Nevada is *Procyon lotor*. It is within the *Procyonidae* family (also called the raccoon family) whose members include the ring-tailed cat of North America, the Coati of Central and South America, and the Panda of Asia. The *Procyonidae* family is characterized as possessing long tails, sharp snouts, slender bodies, and moderate size. Except for the Panda, which lives in the eastern Himalaya up to elevations of 12,000 feet, all members of this family are confined to the Americas.

The genus part of the raccoon's scientific name, *Procyon*, means "before dog" and is thought to be

derived from a group of stars that rise in the summer sky just before the Dog Star, Sirius. The *lotor* part of its name, which identifies its species, means "one who washes." Another species of raccoon, *Procyon cancrivorus*, exists in northern South America and is commonly known as the crab-eating raccoon.

Within the Sierra Nevada, *Procyon lotor* is found from the Yellow Pine belt all the way down to the Great Valley. More generally, the species is found from southern Canada, throughout the United States, through Mexico, Central America, to South America. They are usually found in association with lakes and streams where food can be found. Raccoon habitat is mainly limited by lack of water and they are not found in true desert areas. They are absent in the Great Basin and northern Rocky Mountains. Their tracks (front and hind feet in pairs) are frequently seen in the mud or sand along streams. They do not migrate, having ranges of two to four square miles.

A familiar paw print in the High Sierra.

Raccoons are generally solitary creatures except when mating takes place and while the mother is rearing her young. Mating takes place in the winter with males mating with several females who generally mate with only one male each season. The male will leave the raising of the family to the female. About nine weeks after mating, in spring (April or May), four to six young are born. They are weaned about the second month with the female taking them on short outings to teach them to forage for themselves. The little ones follow her in single file, usually making a racket as they go. At Ash Mountain in Sequoia National Park a mother raccoon had made a home about twenty feet above ground in a hollow branch of a large oak tree. She brought three young ones down the trunk after an hour of struggling. The family remains together all summer and then dens up through the first winter. They do not hibernate but maintain a deep sleep and quickly wake up if disturbed. The following spring the youngters will be on their own.

Enemies of the raccoon include man, mountain lions, bears, bobcats, golden eagles, and hawks. But raccoons are cunning when escaping danger, giving rise to such expressions as "sly coon" and "coony," both meaning crafty.

If you encounter a raccoon, it will likely be in the night since raccoons are among the most strictly nocturnal of American mammals. They often spend the day sleeping in a hollow tree trunk or rock pile and are most active at night when searching for food.

While on a summer evening walk in Yosemite Valley, I stopped to admire some moon reflections in the Merced River. Some tall pines were casting moon shadows across the river's sandy shore. I thought one of the shadows moved and shined a light to see better. Two eyes in the night peered back at me. A dark band across its face gave the creature the appearance of a little masked bandit. Of course, it was just a raccoon searching for a meal. It wasted no time in quickly climbing to a high perch in a nearby pine. My light was not very bright and all I could see was its fluffy ring-tail hanging down below the branch it came to rest on. If you should cross tracks with a racoon, be sure to have your flashlight handy and you may discover a few of its interesting habits — maybe even why it's called the "Washing Bear."

John Ong's
BAR-B-Q BILLS
FAMILY DINING
FOOD TO GO
ON SITE CATERING
Bus Parking Available
187 South Main Street
Bishop, CA 93514

CUSTOM DESIGNS
&
FASHION YARNS
Needle Clique
169 Short St./Bishop, CA
(619) 873-6169

BISHOP Est. 1886
Rexall
DRUG
100 Years of Professional Service To The Owens Valley
174 North Main Street
Bishop, California 93514
(619) 872-8681

A WALK INTO YESTERDAY . . .

COLUMBIA

STATE HISTORIC PARK

by Sharon Dennison

EUREKA! GOLD! The call of excitement and the lure of instant wealth. People from all over the world poured into the California Mother Lode country to seek their fortunes. Some came overland from the East, others by ship around South America and through San Francisco. Tent towns sprang up everywhere and grew into cities almost overnight. Some vanished as quickly as they had been created while others remain to this day. One town that has withstood time is Columbia, located in the Sierra foothills of California.

In the 1920's, while determining whether or not to set up a State Park System, the State of California searched for areas of historical significance within the State. They found Columbia to be one of the best preserved examples of a gold rush town. There were two reasons for this. Following the first of two major fires, in 1854, the town rebuilt the destroyed buildings using locally produced brick, iron doors and iron window shutters. These structures survived additional fires and didn't deteriorate like wooden buildings in most gold rush towns. In addition, over the years the town had done little to modernize. Unfortunately, with the onset of the Depression at the end of the 1920's, there was no money to acquire the property. In 1945, the State of California was finally able to purchase and restore the twelve square block old business district of Columbia as a State Historic Park.

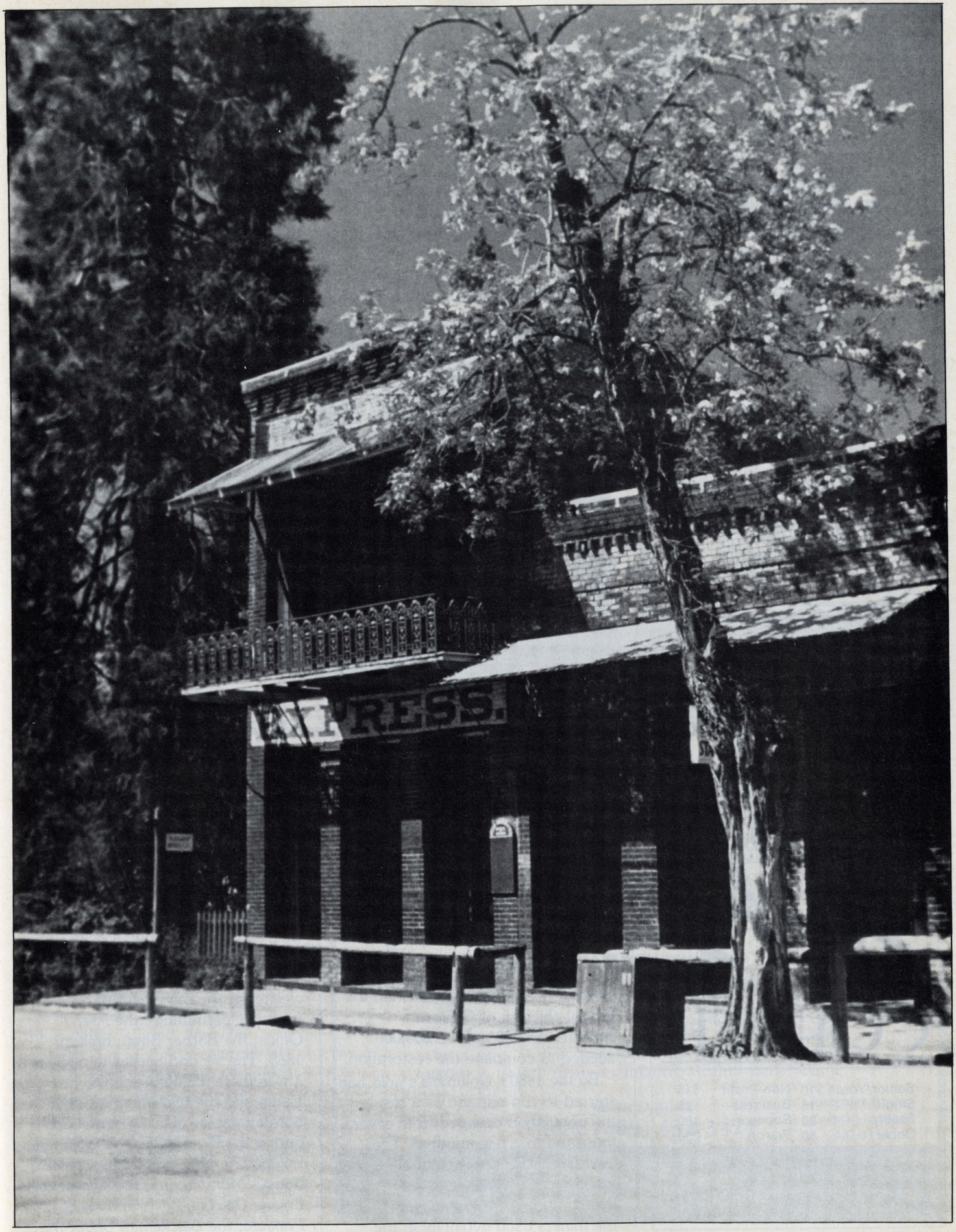
Although gold was discovered by James Marshall at Sutter's Mill on the American River in 1848, the ground that is now Columbia wasn't explored until 1850. Since water is essential to placer mining and no natural streams or rivers ran through the area, it was initially overlooked in the mad quest for the precious metal. In March 1850, Dr. Thadeus Hildreth and a small band of prospectors started digging in Kennebec Hill and almost instantly gathered thirty pounds of nuggets. Within a month a tent-and-shanty town called Hildreth's Diggins had appeared with 5,000 miners frantically searching for gold. Soon they changed the name of the town to American Camp and finally to Columbia.

With winter rains providing a stream to work in, the miners had results beyond their wildest expectations. But when the runoff water from the spring thaws dried up, there was no way to work the dirt. The answer was a system of ditches and reservoirs developed the following spring by the newly formed Tuolumne County Water Company.

All gold rush towns lived with the same fear — Fire! With canvas and wood being the primary construction materials, it could take just one spark to set an entire town ablaze. Columbia's first major fire happened in 1854. By that time Columbia had grown to include over a hundred-fifty businesses; stores, shops, saloons, fandango parlors, a church, a Masonic Lodge and even a branch of the Sons of Temperance. The fire destroyed everything in the central business district except for one brick building.

As a result of the 1854 fire, the New England Water Company was organized to provide water for domestic use and fire fighting. The pipes from this system were used until 1950 when the State of California installed a new system. Reconstruction resulted in several new

continued on page 40


VRESS.

The MAIN STREET SHOP

LGB

One Hour Film Processing
Cameras • Film
GIFT SHOP
COLLECTIBLES
134 South Washington
Sonora, Ca.
(209) 532-3847
Most Major Credit Cards Accepted.

businesses, many of which are still operating today, some in the original buildings. Following reconstruction, Columbia was the second largest city in California.

The second major fire occured in 1857. The town started rebuilding immediately. Following this fire, the citizens decided to form a volunteer fire department and in 1859 purchased their first fire engine. It was a small handpumper named "Papeete." The handpumper was originally purchased by the town of Papeete, Tahiti. When the ship carrying the engine to Tahiti made a stop in San Francisco, the crew jumped ship and headed for the gold fields. The abandoned handpumper was eventually sold to the City of Columbia by the City of San Francisco. A year later they acquired the "Monumental," a larger handpumper. The schoolhouse, one of California's first public schools, was built in 1860. It was used until 1937 and restored in 1960 when the school children of California collected $52,000 of the $60,000 needed to complete the restoration.

By the 1880's Columbia's gold had started to run out and as a result the population dropped from several thousand to a few hundred. The town survived by agriculture, logging and a marble quarry located nearby. When the marble supply dwindled, the miners used dynamite in the quarry to try to extract more marble. This cracked the remaining marble making it useless and the quarry was soon abandoned. Some of the town's buildings were torn down and their sites, along with vacant lots, were mined in a last ditch effort to find more gold. Columbia's cemetary was relocated in 1855 when gold was discovered at the original site.

The first structure built following the fire of 1854 was a general store. This building now houses a museum. In addition to displays depicting the town's history, there is also a narrated slide show. Visitors to Columbia can view life as it was during its heyday with many of the businesses still occupying their original buildings. These "mini-museums" include: the Wells Fargo Express Co.; the Stage Office, where you can still buy a ticket for a 10-15 minute stage ride daily during the summer months and on weekends the remainder of the year (weather permitting); the Assay Office; the Barber Shop, built in 1865. The second barber to operate it was there for 66 years; the Franco Cabin and the Old Miner's Cabin, both examples of living conditions during the Gold Rush; the Columbia Engine Co. No. 1 Firehouse which houses *Monumental*; the Tuolumne Engine Co. No. 2 which houses *Papeete*; the Blacksmith Shop; the

Stage coach rides are offered to visitors at Columbia State Historic Park.

Help us support the ARTS!

CENTRAL SIERRA Arts COUNCIL

(209) 532-2787

Senior/Youth	$10	Non-Profit	$15
Single	15	Business	25
Family	20	Sponsor	100
Doner	50	Patron	250

Life Membership $500

Your membership fee is tax-deductible!

Central Sierra Arts Council
229 S. Shepard St./Sonora, CA 95370

Livery Stable; the Drug Store; the Dentists; the Chinese Herb Shop; and the Jail which was in use until the 1930's. Many of these "mini-museums" contain tape recorded narrations decribing the daily routines of these businesses during the Gold Rush days. The Columbia Gazette office is a replica of the original newspaper office built in 1855. The Gazette is still an operating newspaper.

Columbia State Historical Park has between 350,000-500,000

Visitors pan for gold at a sluice box.

visitors each year. Although the State owns all of the buildings in the Park, the individual businesses are owned by private concessionaires who are approved by the State. Employees dress in costumes of the period and all motor vehicle traffic is prohibited between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. in order to preserve the look and feel of the Gold Rush days.

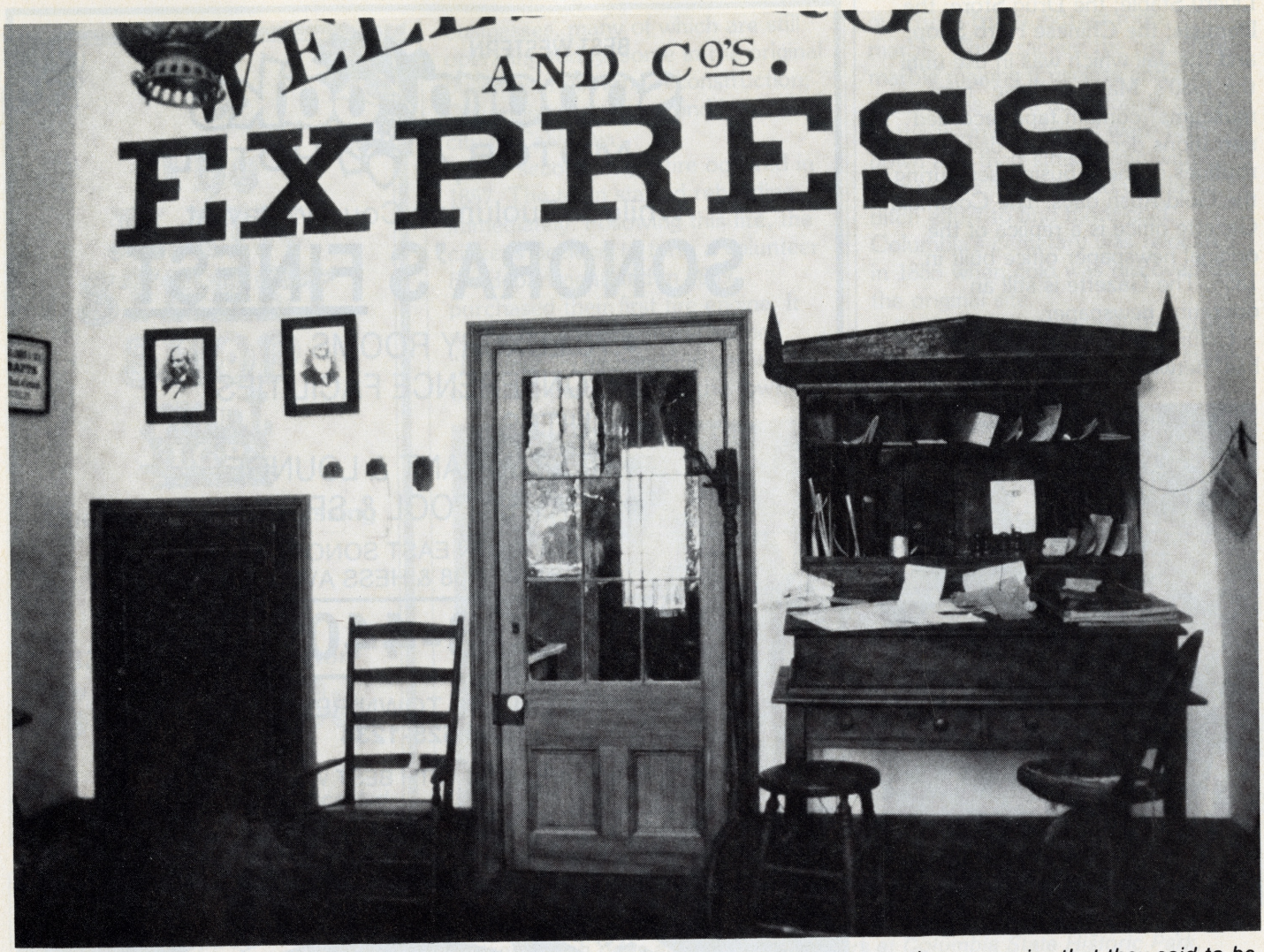
Sherrin Grout, Park Ranger, says, "Our main season is summer, but we don't really have an off-season. We're very weather dependent. If the weather is good, we have crowds." Located at an altitude of approximately 2,000 feet, Columbia has warm summers and mild winters, lending itself to outdoor activities. In the spring an abundance of wildflowers decorate the countryside.

Many events are regularly scheduled at Columbia during the

BEST WESTERN
sonora oaks
MOTOR HOTEL
While in Tuolumne County Stay At
SONORA'S FINEST
- 70 LUXURY ROOMS
- CONFERENCE FACILITIES
- SUITES
- RESTAURANT & LOUNGE
- HEATED POOL & SPA

LOCATED IN EAST SONORA
HIGHWAY 108 & HESS AVE.
(209) 533-4400
Best Western
TOLL FREE OUT OF TOWN RESERVATIONS
800 528-1234
"REST ASSURED WITH BEST WESTERN"

SONORA'S HISTORIC HOTEL
Est. 1850
GUNN HOUSE
MOTOR HOTEL
WESTERN HOSPITALITY
TRADITION
Authentic Victorian Furnishings
Solar Heated Pool & Patio
Continental Breakfast
Cocktail Lounge
MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
Conveniently located in central Sonora within easy walking distance to many services and restaurants, the Gunn House continues to remain a favorite getaway in California's romantic Mother Lode. Come and see us.
RESERVATIONS
Phone (209) 532-3421
Josephine Room
Cocktail Lounge
533-4111
286 So. Washington
Sonora, California 95370



An estimated $55 Million in gold was weighed by Wells Fargo, an ounce at a time, on scales so precise that they said to be able to "weigh the pencil mark on a piece of paper."

year. In addition to the on going musical presentations at Columbia College and the Repertory Theater performances at the Fallon Theater, there are: the Easter Parade, Box Social and Egg Hunt; the Columbia Wine Tasting Festival; the Old Mill 10K Run; the Annual Fireman's Muster; Columbia Diggins Days; the Annual Columbia Fly-In (one of only two airports in Tuolumne County); the Annual 1890 Street Dance and Bar-B-Q; Admission Day Celebration; the Annual Outdoor Art Show; Columbia Harvest Crafts Festival; Fiddle and Banjo Contest; Lamplight Tour of Columbia; and Columbia Miner's Christmas Pageant.

According to Park Ranger Ann Meneguzzi, the biggest event of the year is the Fireman's Muster which attracts crowds of up to 10,000 people. Held the first weekend in May of each year, the Fireman's Muster includes a parade, Bar-B-Q dinner and dance, and volunteer fire departments from all over the Mother Lode competing in "fireman" related events.

During its run as one of the premier Gold Rush towns of California, almost $90 million in gold was taken out of Columbia ($1.5 billion by today's standards). Today the gold is in the form of logging and tourism.

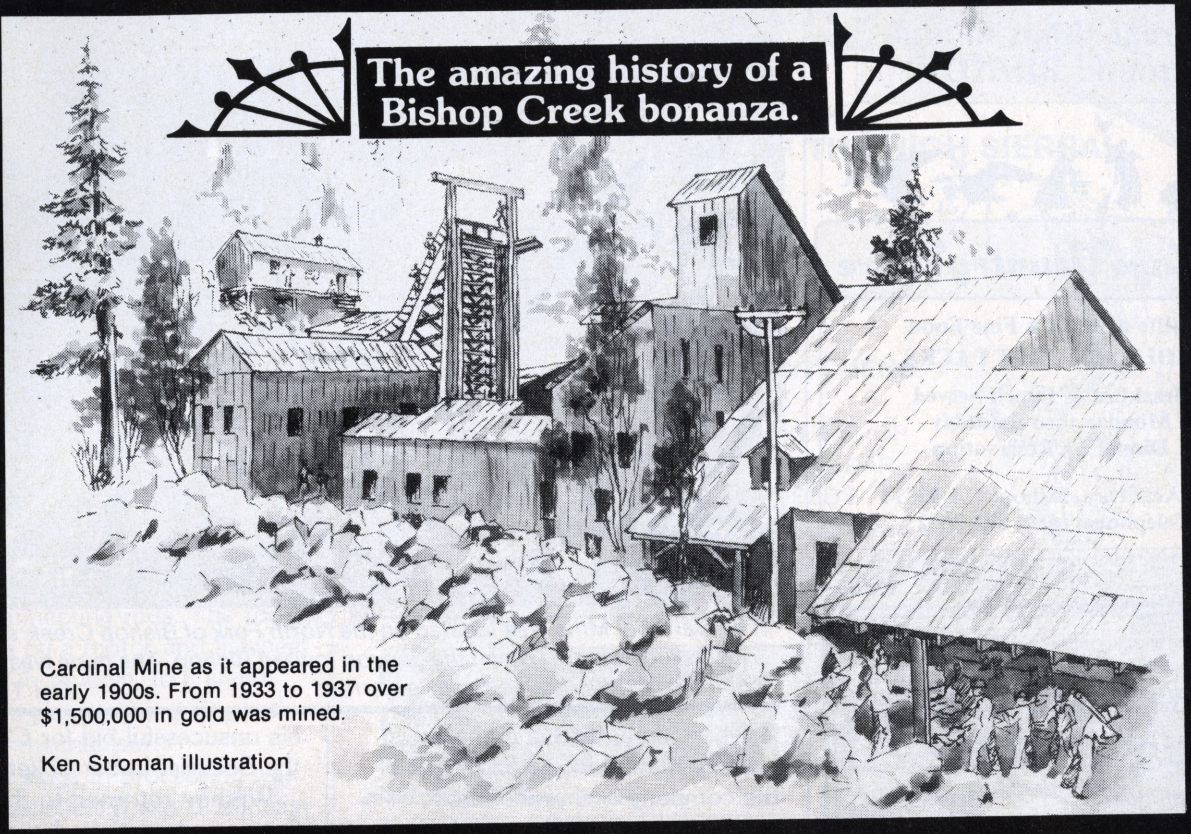
To reach Columbia, travel east from the San Francisco Bay area on State Route 120, or east from Modesto on State Route 108 to Sonora. From Sonora, travel north on State Route 49 for approximately three miles to the Columbia State Historic Park turnoff which is well marked.

For information concerning upcoming events and activities at Columbia, call the Park Office at (209) 532-4301. Lodging is available in surrounding areas — everything from fully restored hotels of the Gold Rush era, bed & breakfast inns, and modern motels. Two RV/trailer campgrounds are located within a mile of the Park. There is easy access to snow skiing in the winter and boating, water skiing and fishing during warm weather.

Walking through the streets of Columbia gives one a feeling of participation in an era long-since past, and of being able to view firsthand one of the most exciting periods in American history. □

The Cardinal Mine

The amazing history of a Bishop Creek bonanza.



Cardinal Mine as it appeared in the early 1900s. From 1933 to 1937 over $1,500,000 in gold was mined.

Ken Stroman illustration

by Mark Allison

Conversation is muffled by a gentle breeze rustling the golden fall leaves of aspen trees. The sound transforms the music of nearby Bishop Creek into a soft, woody tune.

Time and his best friend, Change, have silenced the relentless pounding, clanking, grinding, whirring and blasting. The Cardinal Mine is now ruins. In its place stands the Cardinal Village Resort where guests play volleyball where miners grew their vegetables eighty years ago. Cement foundations, closed shafts, twisted pipe, the wooden skeleton of the main shaft's headframe, and the fine, powdery tailings are monuments that speak of the bustling activity that came to a halt fifty years ago.

White men first explored Bishop Creek Canyon, site of the Cardinal Mine, in the 1850s. They were hunters and trappers testing their skills at 8,000 and 9,000 foot elevations. They were followed in the 1860s by stockmen escaping the drought of California's coastal mountain ranges.

The first settlements on Bishop Creek were sheep and cattle camps. Logging camps followed with the first sawmill being constructed in 1870 on the South Fork of Bishop Creek.

By 1880, mining camps had sprung up throughout Owens Valley, but it wasn't until 1890 that rich ore was discovered at the north Bishop Creek Camp. The Bishop Creek Mining District was formed and a company called "Tip-Top" made the original claim on what would eventually become the Cardinal Mine.

In 1895, "Tip-Top" sold its mining rights to the Bishop Creek Gold Company. The famed and controversial politician, Gaylord Wilshire (namesake of Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles), took an interest in the mine and after a major reorganization in 1906, he became Secretary of the company.

continued on next page

off the beaten track
Great shops in and around BISHOP!

The Inyo Country Store

Gifts • Herbs • Fine Food
GOURMET GIFT PACKS
Breakfast & Lunch Served
Monday thru Saturday
Dinner by Reservation

177 Academy, Bishop, CA 93514
Telephone: (619) 872-2552

The Wishing Wheel
Antiques & Art

- Antiques
- Collectibles
- Indian Crafts
- Jewelry
- Pottery
- Carvings

2212 North Sierra Highway
Bishop, California 93514
(619) 873-7370

Buttermilk MOUNTAIN HOME

Nice Things at Reasonable Prices!
Gifts & Creations
For that truly special gift!

PIONEER
PIONEER ELECTRONICS (USA) INC.

175 Academy Street/Bishop, CA
(619) 872-1234

The Cardinal Mine was located on the North Fork of Bishop Creek shown above. View is looking east down the canyon toward Bishop. The mine was located just behind the ridge marked with an arrow. *Cal Turner Photo*

Wilshire, an agressive and already wealthy man, became President of the company two years later

In order to feed the growing population of the mining camp, the company leased government land adjacent to the mine property and began raising cattle, ducks and chickens. A vegetable garden provided fresh produce and beehives were constructed for honey. A school house was built, and the mining camp was firmly rooted.

Two years later, in 1910, the mine was shut down. Several mine shafts had penetrated the aquifers below North Lake and the constant water leakage made the miner's work too dangerous to continue.

Wilshire was in London at the time dealing with another serious problem — a stock fraud inquiry involving nearly a billion dollars. It was alleged that Wilshire had used funds, raised for another venture, to fund the mine at Bishop Creek. Although the charges were unfounded and he was cleared, Wilshire did use profits from the Bishop Creek Gold Company to fund his political ventures including his unsucessful bid for Congress on the Socialist Labor ticket.

Wilshire returned to the United States and continued operating the mine. Water leakage was brought under control by installing pumps and the mine reopened in 1911. Late in 1912, a mill was constructed which indicates that ore at the site was rich in gold and justified the substantial investment of a mill. Mining journals from 1912 reported average yields of $8.00 per ton.

Between 1912 and 1927 the old mining equipment was upgraded. Diamond drills were added and the capacity of flotation tanks was increased.

Gaylord Wilshire suffered a fatal heart attack in 1927. After Wilshire's death, an Inyo County bank took over the mine property under receivership and leased it in 1931 to Consolidated Metals Corporation, who in turn sold the lease to Anglo-American Mining Company. In 1933 the Cardinal Gold Company was formed and acquired the property.

One of the principal stock holders of the Cardinal Gold Company was Gene Tunney, former World Heavyweight Champion who

defeated Jack Dempsey in a controversial bout. In the first two years the newly formed company operated, more flotation tanks were added and newer, more powerful mining equipment was purchased boosting the mine's capacity to 150 tons.

Many of man's inventions and activities are outward extensions of his own physical senses, abilities and bodily processes. Gold mining is no exception. It resembles the human digestive process. (See mining diagram on page 46.)

The first stage of "digestion" was accomplished by a machine called a jaw crusher. This was a set of heavy steel jaws which were lined with replaceable face plates that had slight, vertical corrugations. The plate was pivoted at the bottom and forced toward the heavy, stationary "jaw" by connecting rods. The rods were driven by a motor and flywheel similar, but in reverse, to a steam locomotive's piston-connecting rod-drive wheel mechanism.

The next stage in processing was a gyratory crusher. It was a tall, cast iron cone which received large chunks of ore at its top. A long, thick rod in the center of the cone was stirred by machinery from the bottom. The top end was held in a fixed, pivoting joint. This ingenious arrangement created an increasing diameter of rod movement toward the bottom of the cone allowing the pieces from the larger chunks at the top to be crushed smaller as gravity pulled them toward the bottom. It was comparable to a large inverted mortar and pestle.

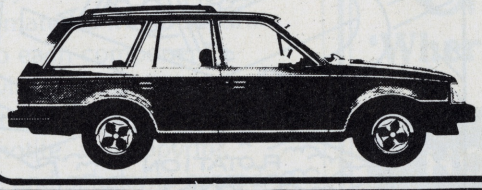
Conveyer belts fed the crushed ore into a rod mill. This was a horizontal cylinder, similar to a cement mixer, which was kept filled to about one third of its capacity. It contained rods measuring about twelve feet long, four inches in diameter and weighing 350 pounds each. As the cylinder rotated, the rods would roll up the sides and fall on each other crushing the ore even finer. The rod mill was continuously sluiced with water. The "fines," or milky, silty slurry, would be drained off and sent to the flotation tanks.

BISHOP CREEK LODGE
ALL SEASONS RESORT
IN THE HEART OF THE HIGH SIERRA!

FINE DINING
Friday & Saturday
BREAKFAST • LUNCH • DINNER
DAILY
INDIVIDUAL CABINS with KITCHENS
2 to 8 Persons
LODGE • MINI MART • TACKLE SHOP
RESTAURANT • FULL SERVICE BAR
PROPANE • CAMPING NEEDS
Call or write for our free brochure!

Your Hosts — Gary & Suzie Olson
P.O. Box 1628/Bishop, CA 93514 (Located on South Lake Rd.)
(619) 873-4484

FORD
RENTALS
As Low as $35.00 per day!
(619) 873-4291



FALS
FORD AUTHORIZED LEASING SYSTEM
WEEKLY INSURANCE RATES AVAILABLE
EASTERN SIERRA MOTORS 1440 N. HWY 6 BISHOP, CA

Historic "Where Eagles Soar" Est. 1906
CARDINAL VILLAGE
On the North Fork of Bishop Creek
Completely equipped housekeeping cabins
Bait and Tackle • Cafe • General Store • Lodge
Call for our 'Winter Rates!'
Reservations: (619) 873-4789
Your hosts, Hal and Barbara Invite you to come and enjoy God's majestic creation with us!
Box A-3 • Bishop, California 93514

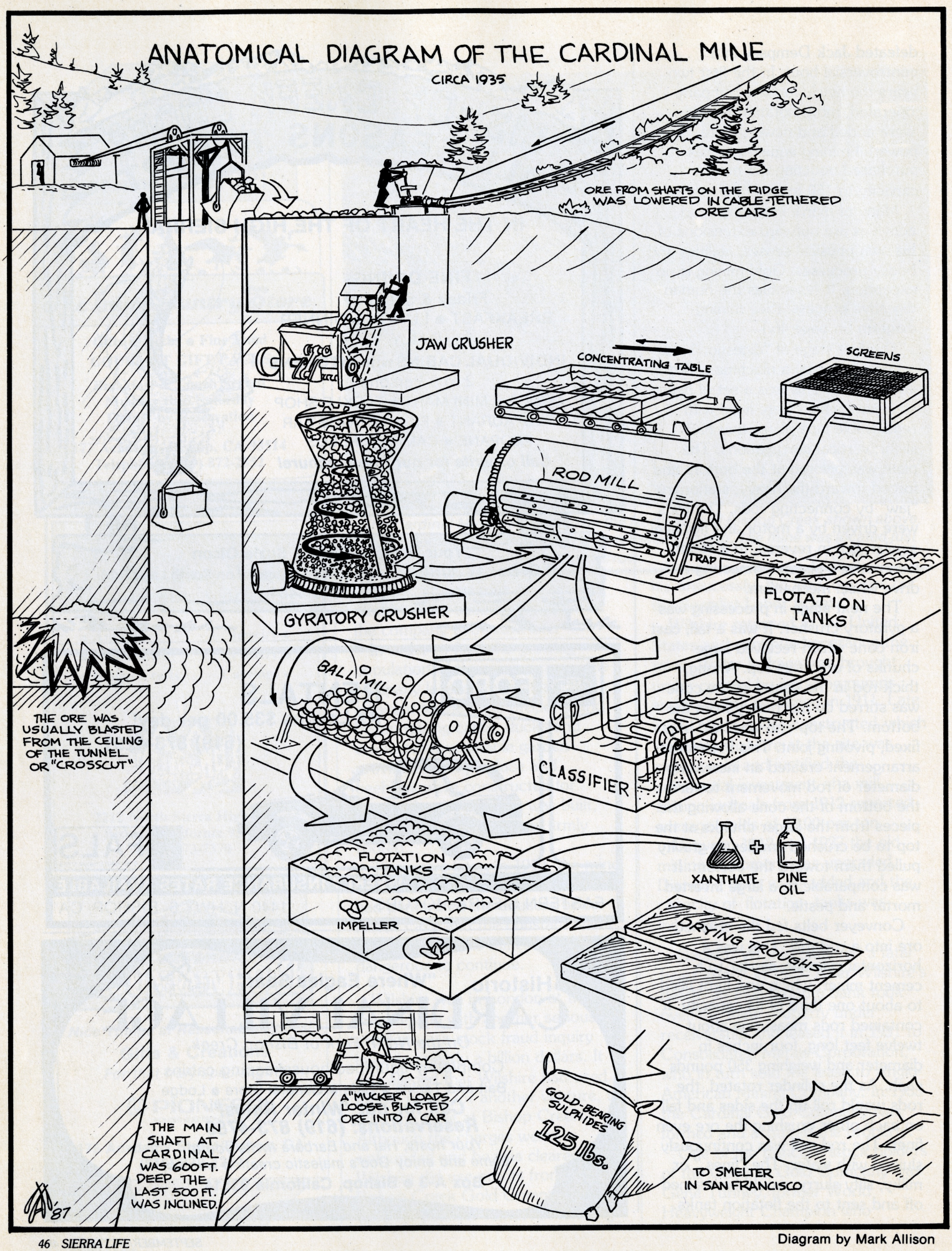


Diagram by Mark Allison

The wooden headframe of the Cardinal Mine is shown above. The main shaft was 600 feet deep with the first 100' vertical and the last 500' inclined. Mark Allison Photo

The remaining sand/water mixture, depending on its coarseness, would either go directly to the ball mill, or first to the classifier then the ball mill. Both the ball mill and classifier were sluiced with water to remove the fines.

The classifier was a sloping tank, five feet wide, two feet deep and ten feet long. It processed the coarser sand/water mixture from the rod mill. Inside the classifier were two ladder-like mechanisms that moved in vertical circles in "taffy-puller" fashion. This motion stirred and lifted the water/sand mixture, allowing the fines to be drained off the bottom. The coarser "middlings," or "returns," went to the ball mill.

The ball mill was a rotating cylinder, similar to the rod mill, also oriented horizontally. It was partially filled with irons balls five inches in diameter. The iron balls would roll and drop on each other, grinding the watery sand into a fine powder. This slurry would then go to the flotation tanks.

Box-shaped traps at the ends of both the rod mill and ball mill caught coarse and fine gold as well as other heavy minerals. This was strained to remove small, flattened pieces of free gold, pieces of brass blasting caps, and blasting wire. The material caught in the traps would then be put on concentrating tables. These were water-filled tanks with horizonally aligned riffles in the bottom. The tanks were shaken, more strongly in the direction of one end, so the material would separate according to each component's specific gravity — gold at one end, light sand at the other. Gold bearing pyrite, pyrrhotite, arsenopyrite, chalcopyrite and sphalerite spread over the grooves between the gold and sand.

Flotation tanks were cube-shaped and three feet wide on each side. The fines in the tanks were stirred by an impeller. Pine oil and xanthate were added to the slurry which combined chemically with the gold bearing sulphides and floated to the top of the tank. This frothy emulsion was lapped into a trough, drained, dried, bagged and shipped to the Selby smelter in San Francisco. The smelter heated the sulphides, driving off the sulphur. Chemicals were then added to bind with, and remove other impurities.

BISHOP
GRILL
'Where the locals eat'

HOME STYLE
COOKING
Since 1965

We Make Our Own
PIES
&
SOURDOUGH
BREAD

Open - 6 a.m.- 8 p.m.

281 North Main Street
Bishop, California 93514
(619) 873-3911

INYO - MONO
BODY SHOP

387 N.WARREN-BISHOP, CA.

ASE CERTIFIED

COMPLETE AUTO
BODY REPAIR
FRAME STRAIGHTENING
RADIATOR REPAIRS
AUTO GLASS INSTALLED
PAINTING
24 HOUR TOW SERVICE
4 TO 18 WHEELERS

(619) 873-4271

Eastern Sierra
Wood Products

Serving the Eastern Sierra!

Custom
Cabinetry

Furniture
by
Design

(619) 872-1626
151 So. Warren St. P.O. Box 159
Bishop, California 93514

A glassy slag was formed and removed leaving pure molten gold which was then poured into bullion.

Richard B. Bailey, of Reno, Nevada, worked at the Cardinal Mine until 1935 greasing mill machinery for $3.50 a day. "In 1933," Bailey remembers, "the engineer and manager at the mine, a man named Val DeCamp, built a new wood-framed mill. About a year later, the mill burned down. DeCamp immediately ordered a metal replacement and had it comfortably heated during the winter."

Bailey was impressed with this energetic manager. "DeCamp was a big, rugged, ruddy-faced, hard-living, hard-drinking, hell-raising Dutchman. He was also the manager of the United Verde Copper Company in Arizona."

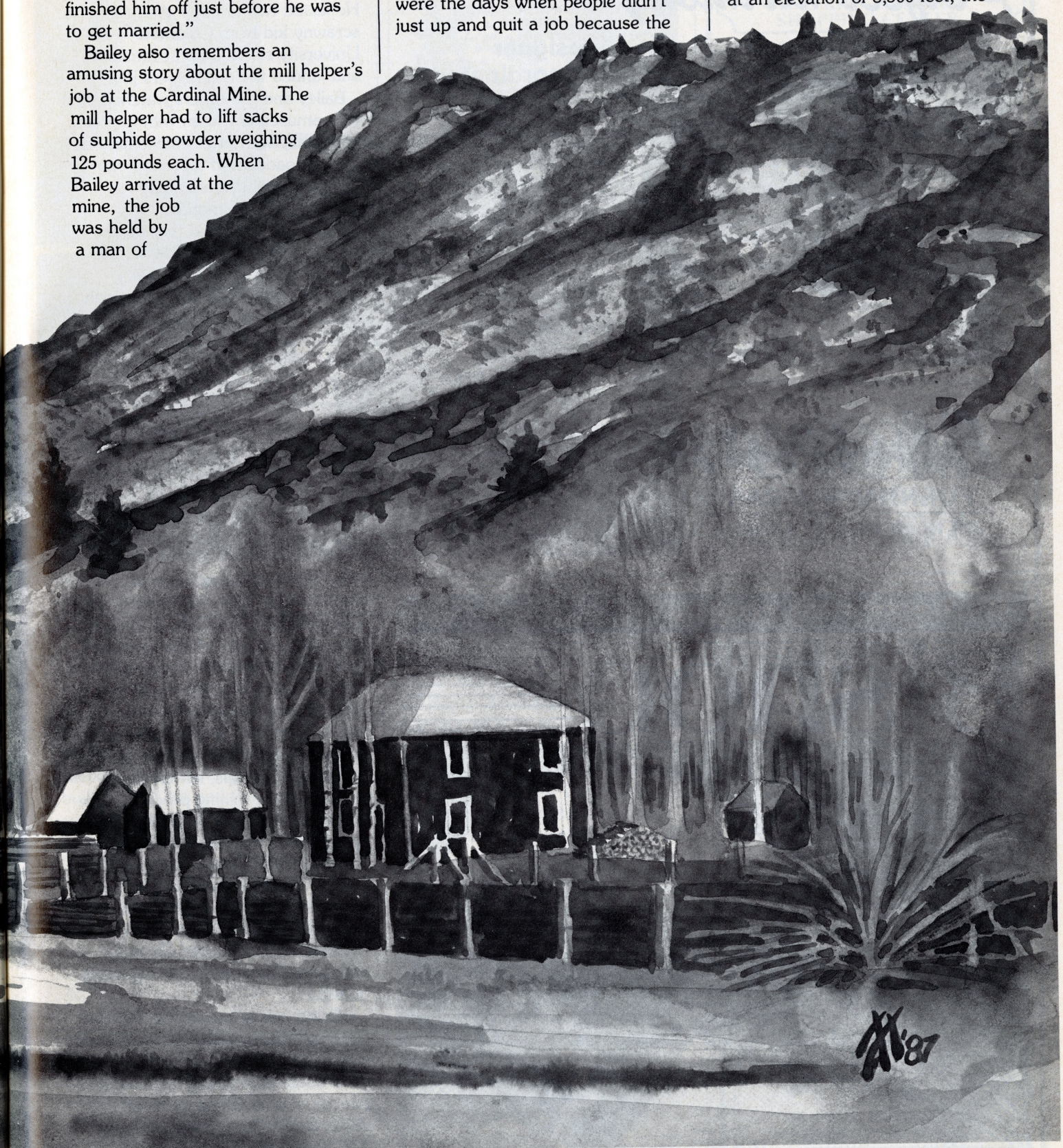
According to Bailey, DeCamp would work all day at the copper mine in Arizona, then drive all night to get to the Cardinal Mine on Bishop Creek. Once there, he would stomp around, raise hell, chew out the foremen and mine workers, sign the checks (in his beautiful, almost lady-like handwriting), then drive to Keough's Hot Springs near Bishop where he would drink and dance with all the ladies on the outdoor dance floor, and then at midnight, he would drive back to Arizona!

"DeCamp's 'style' finally killed him," Bailey recalls. "He went to

Sketch from a Winter/Spring 1908 photo. Building on the left was the now (with additions) the Cardinal Village Resort. The fenced area in

Bolivia to work at the tin mines, carrying on in his usual way at altitudes of 12,000 and 14,000 feet. It finished him off just before he was to get married."

Bailey also remembers an amusing story about the mill helper's job at the Cardinal Mine. The mill helper had to lift sacks of sulphide powder weighing 125 pounds each. When Bailey arrived at the mine, the job was held by a man of medium build who, by Bailey's calculations, loaded and unloaded about twenty-five tons a day. "These were the days when people didn't just up and quit a job because the work was too hard," Bailey emphasized. "After three or four months of lifting twenty-five tons a day at an elevation of 8,500 feet, the



stables. Small buildings in center were cabins. Large building on right was the paymaster's lodge. It is right foreground was the mine's vegetable garden. *Reference photo courtesy Los Angeles Museum of Natural Sciences, History Division*
Illustrated by Mark Allison

Perfect harmony . . .

designer coordinated home furnishings.

Everthing for the home in our 8,000 sq. ft. showroom — or select that 'just right' piece from our catalogs!

- Carpet
- Flooring
- Complete Condo Packages

Showcase
FURNITURE & CARPET

FREE DELIVERY
Mammoth, June Lake
and Hwy. 395 South from Bishop

224 North Main St. • Bishop, CA 93514 • (619) 872-1177

It's happening now in —

Bishop

LIVE, WORK and PLAY in PARADISE
Contact: BISHOP CHAMBER of COMMERCE
690 North Main Street/Bishop,CA 93514/(619) 873-8405

man just plain wore out."

Bailey rememers the man's replacement, ". . . a big, burly guy. He lasted two months. And then the scrawny kid from Columbia University showed up at the mine and landed the mill helpers job."

Bailey and the others watched, first with amusement, then with interest, and finally with utter amazement as the kid loaded and unloaded bag after bag, eight hours a day for weeks, and then months!

It was later learned that before coming to the Cardinal Mine, the kid had spent a considerable amount of time in Bolivia. His high altitude training had served him well.

The miners worked seven-days-a-week. What little time off they had was spent in different ways — depending on how much energy they had left. Some fished, others danced at Keough's and some played softball in Bishop on a team called "The Cardinals." The team's archrival was the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power team.

Another rewarding pastime, one that didn't require much energy, was taking tweezers and picking flat little specs of gold off the screens that were used to sift trappings from the rod mill. It was too small an amount of gold for the company to worry about, but it was fun, relaxing and profitable for the miners. Bits of brass blasting caps, left on the screens in the mining process, were separated from the gold by soaking the granules and flakes in water for a week. The minerals in the water had no affect on the gold, but "blew the whistle" on the brass by turning it green. After awhile, the miners replaced patience with perception and were able to pick out the brass on sight.

Mining journals reported that the Cardinal Mine yielded 897 pounds of gold in 1935. In the eight months the mine operated in 1938, it yielded 536 pounds of gold, 155 pounds of silver, and 4,395 pounds of copper. The mine was shut down in late 1938. Apparently, due to the war effort, men were not available to continue working the mine.

The miner's cabins are still used for guest lodging at the Cardinal Village Resort. Cabins were named after lakes in the area. Mark Allison photo

The property the mine lay on remained dormant for nearly ten years. Then, in the late 1940s, Peter McLaurin purchased the complex of buildings and turned it into a fisherman's resort. In 1946, Lois Kieser's parents purchased the building that housed the mine's commissary and post office and converted it into a family dwelling. Lois and Gib Kieser still live in the home. "Very little was changed in the building," Lois says. "The former card room sported signs which read *Don't spit on the floor*, and *Any card you tear will cost you 5¢*."

Wells and Bernice Hall bought the resort in 1951. They operated it for fifteen years and then sold it in 1958 to the Neschers, who in turn sold it to the Strattons in 1968.

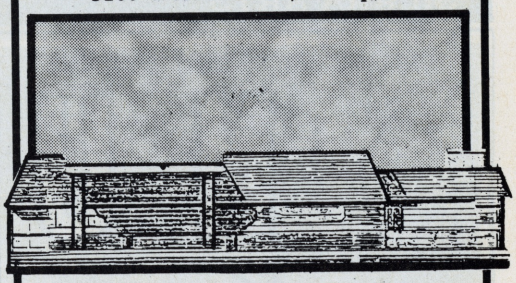
The miner's cabins are still used for guest lodging. The cabins bear names borrowed from lakes in the area named by John and Art Schober — Moonlight, Loch Leven, Midnight, Blue Heaven, Baboon and Topsy Turvy. Strangely, the building which housed the school was named after Drunken Sailor Lake. This building has since been torn down by the Forest Service, who owns all but five acres of land in the vicinity.

Harold and Barbara Cluff purchased the resort in 1985. They love sharing local history and tall tales with their guests.

The gold of the Cardinal Mine is no longer brought up from the 600 foot main shaft. Today, the gold is in the leaves of the aspen as the breeze turns into a whisper and the sky glows with pink and lavender at sunset. □

We extend our gratitude for the timely and extensive assistance received from many kind people while researching the history of the Cardinal Mine. Special thanks to Hal and Barbara Cluff, Richard B. Bailey, Sam Cleland, Gib and Lois Kieser, Mr. & Mrs. John Schober, the Laws Museum, and our friends at the Bishop Library.

WESTRIDGE MANOR SHOPPING CENTER
3100 West Line St./Bishop, CA



MANOR MARKET
GAS • MARKET • VIDEO RENTALS
The friendliest store in the Valley!
OLD FASHIONED, FULL SERVICE MEAT COUNTER
"Us little folks try harder!"
(619) 873-4296
The **Wine Barrel** at **Manor Market** offers the largest selection of imported and domestic wines in the Owens Valley!

KOBY'S True Value HARDWARE STORES
More than a name — it's our way of doing business
LAWN & GARDEN
SUPPLIES
HARDWARE
SMALL APPLIANCES
& GIFTS
PAINT & SUNDRIES
(619) 873-3106

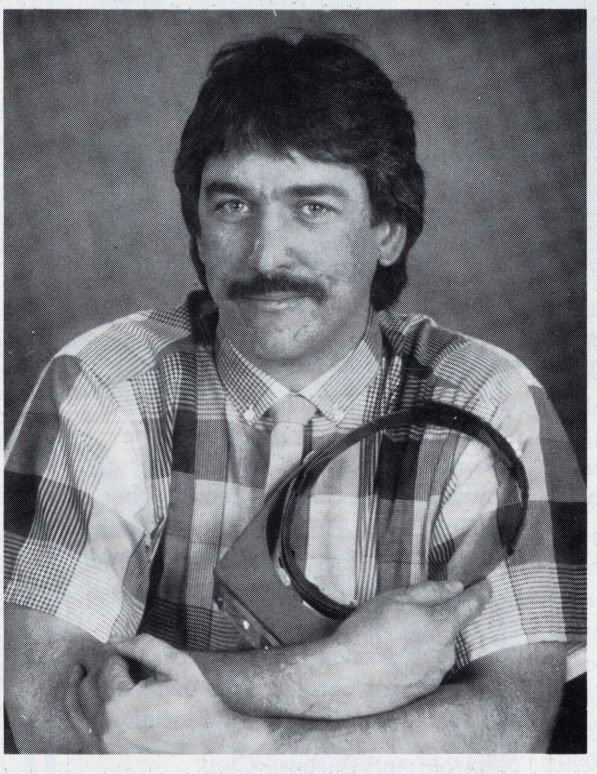
SIERRA SAVE PHARMACY
TRULY PERSONAL PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES
24 HOUR EMERGENCY PRESCRIPTION SERVICE
(619) 873-7144

NUGGETS

Creating Art From Nature

A window shopper strolls by, a glimmer catches his eye. His head turns and he moves closer. His finger smudges the glass as he points and then calls a friend over to confirm what he sees. Their mouths form small "o's" that express admiration and a touch of awe. Finally, the more curious of the pair peeks his head in the door and asks, "What kinda gold is that?"

"It's gold the way nature created it," explains John R. Taylor, owner of the Gold &Gem Co. in Mariposa, California. "The natural gold nuggets in my window represent a very small portion of the amount of gold that is still being discovered in the creeks and streams all along the Mother Lode," Taylor says. As a jeweler in a popular gold country town who has more than a million people drive by his window every year, Taylor has a lot of opportunity to educate the uninitiated in the reality and subtlety of natural gold nuggets and the jewelry they can become.



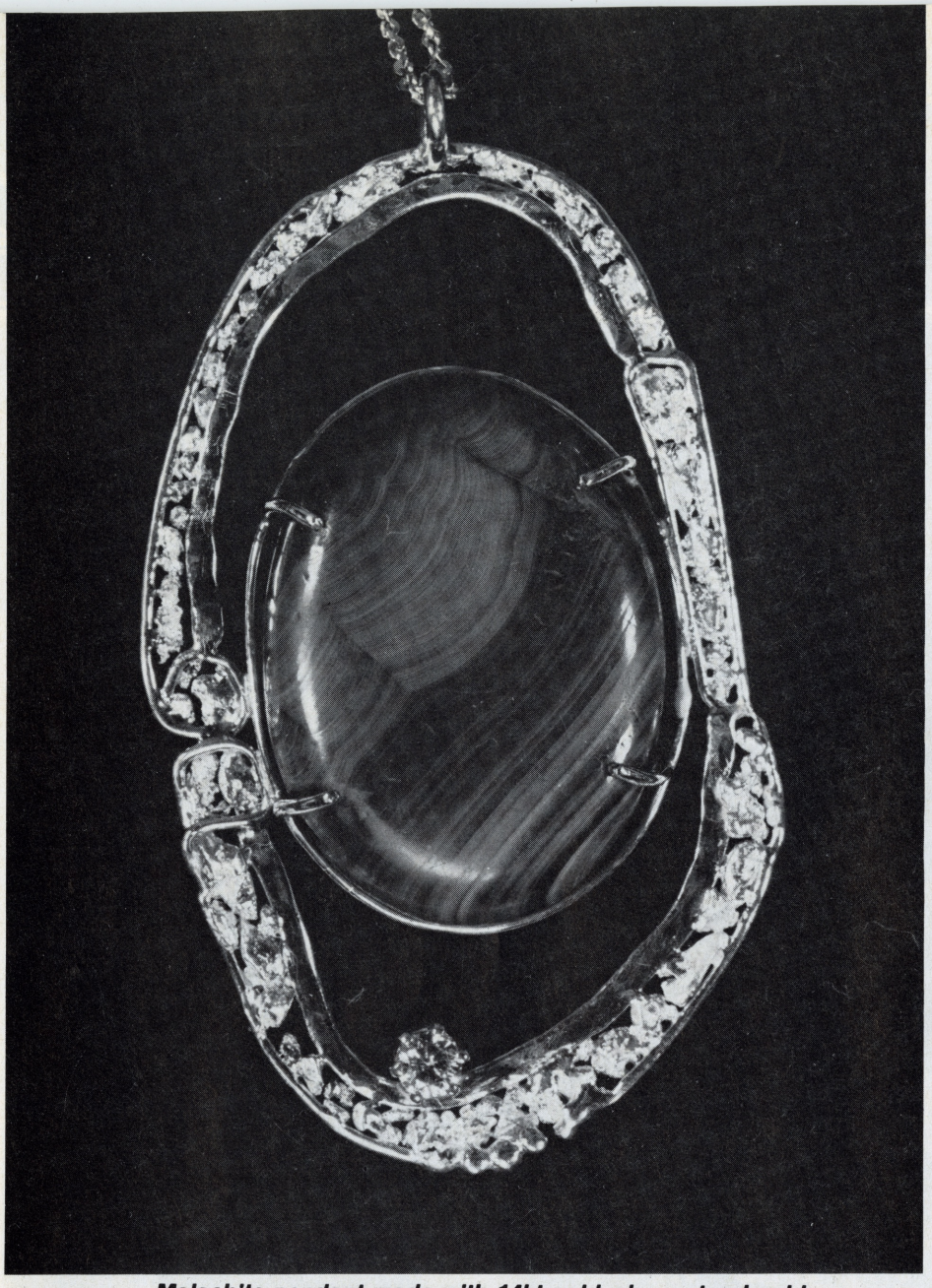
Taylor, a tall, darkly handsome man with magnetic blue eyes and a lopsided grin, has been fascinated with rocks, minerals and gemstones since boyhood.

"I love to see visitors to our area react to my window display," Taylor says. "They can't believe those little nuggets that are so full of character, so raw, are found by people just like themselves." Unfortunately," Taylor adds, "I'm sure there are still those who go away thinking that it's all some sort of ruse we play on tourists."

Taylor, a tall, darkly handsome man with magnetic blue eyes and a lopsided grin, has been fascinated with rocks, minerals and gemstones since he was a little boy. "My father, Neil, was a uranium prospector and then a rock shop owner while I was growing up. He was always out rockhounding. I remember my first big "find" was along the California coast, near Pacific Valley. I had just woke up when nature called. I staggered sleepily outside the camper, and next thing I knew I was the proud owner of a fine piece of

continued on page 54

14kt and 18kt gold rings inlayed with natural gold nuggets, set with round brilliant cut diamonds.



Malachite pendant made with 14kt gold wire, natural gold nuggets and a .10ct diamond.

California Nephrite Jade — just what we'd been looking for all the previous day. It's amazing what you can find when you get a dusty old rock wet . . ."

Rockhounding led Taylor to lapidary work, lost-wax casting, Gemological Institute of America (G.I.A.) training, and finally to owning his own jewelry store. The ability to take a jewelry design from conception to completion allows Taylor supreme control over his art, but it can also have its drawbacks. "Sometimes, I can design something in my head that my hands just can't reproduce." At this point, Taylor usually lets the idea ferment for awhile. "I find that if I just let my subconcious work on the design, by the time I'm ready to render the idea in wax, it comes quite easily."

One of Taylor's goals is to create an entire line of natural nugget jewelry. "Nuggets are exciting to work with," Taylor says, "because they are all unique. Each nugget has its own character."

A nuggets individual appearance is the result of millions of years of evolution and erosion. Usually, the closer placer gold is found to its source, a quartz vien, the rougher its appearance. These nuggets, if they are of any size, are usually used for pendants. Smaller nuggets which have been flattened by large rocks over the years, are used for inlay work, and the smallest nuggets (under the size of a matchhead) are most often sealed into lockets. Taylor also displays a fine collection of crystalline gold. This gold, found inside the quartz vein, is delicate, lacy and very beautiful. It's fragility, however, prevents its use in jewelry. It is most often sold as specimen gold.

Taylor says nugget inlay wedding bands, sometimes also set with gemstones, are among the most popular items he sells. "it's really special for people who have found their own gold to bring it in and have me make their rings. It adds another element of romance to their commitment." Tourists also choose the nugget bands because they are so unique. "People from the East Coast and Europe are skeptical at first," Taylor says, "but, once they know what nuggets are and how they're found, they sell themselves. They like going home with something no one else will have."

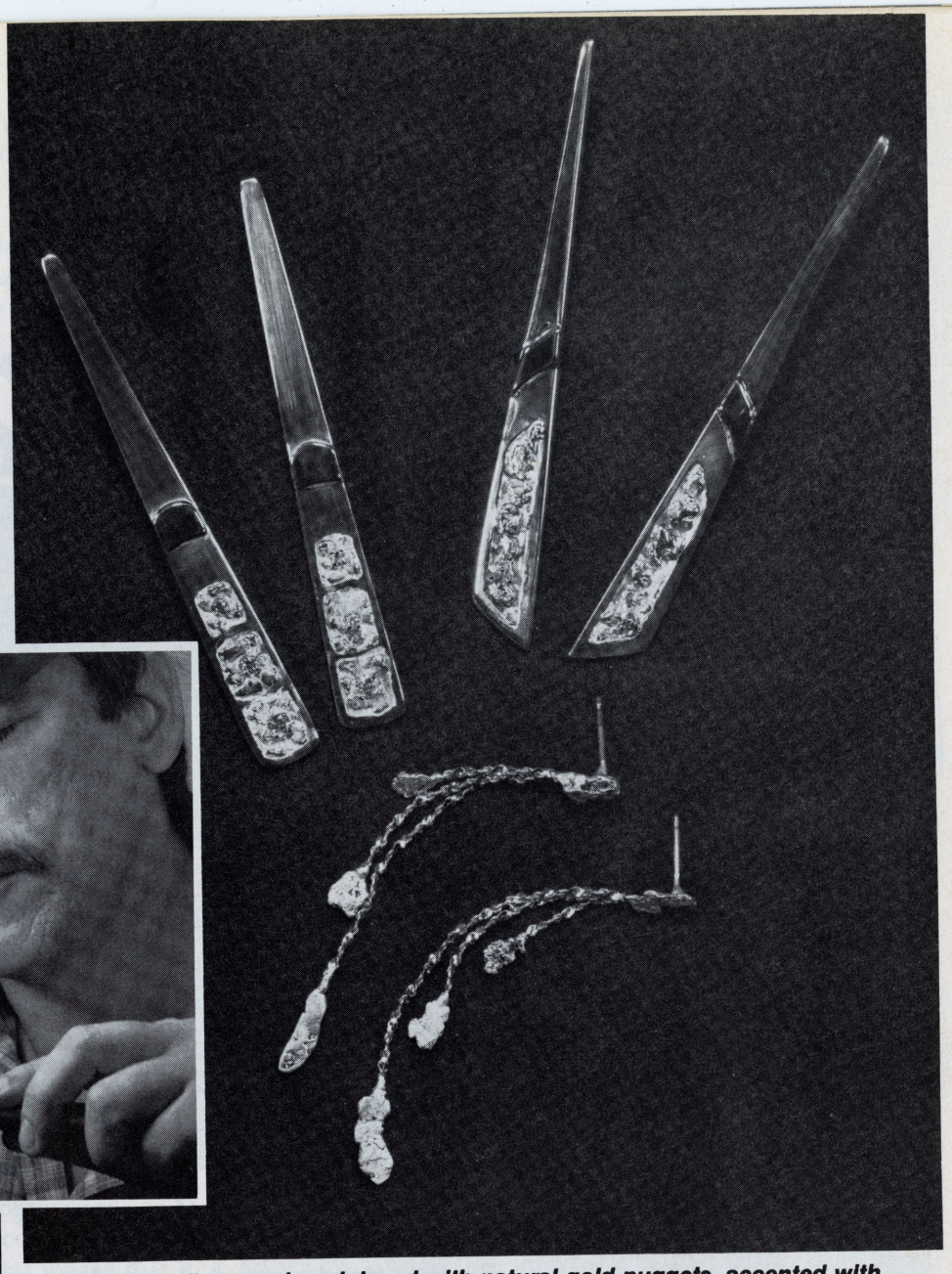
Natural nuggets not only have unique shapes, they also vary in color. "It depends on where they are found," Taylor explains, "and what other metals are present."

Natural nuggets not only have unique shapes, they also vary in color. "It depends on where they are found," Taylor explains, "and what other metals are present. Nuggets found in the Mariposa area usually run about 86% (approximately 20kt.) pure, and as a result, are a rich gold color, and are very bright. I like to contrast their richness with smooth, highly polished 14 or 18kt. gold and/or sterling silver. The combination can be quite striking."

The Gold & Gem Co., with its cool gey interior, oak cabinetry and brass accents, reflects the personality of the artist and his philosophy about jewelry. "I want my customers to feel comfortable

when they come in, but a little exhilarated when they leave — especially if they've just picked up a piece of jewelry that I've created for them."

The store is located in the fully refurbished, 1901 Mariposa Hotel on State Highway 140 (the all-weather highway into Yosemite National Park), in the old downtown section of Mariposa. The area is rich in Gold Rush history and many of the merchants are restoring their buildings creating a quaint turn-of-the-century air. This atmoshpere helps Taylor and his customers get into a creative mood. "When I'm designing a piece of jewelry for someone, I want them to be as involved as possible," Taylor says. "We have to get to know each other, especially if that person doesn't really know what they want. Sometimes all that's there is the desire for something new, different and only theirs. These people are often nervous — they don't trust their judgement. That's when the environment can really help. That's why I've tried to create a serene, gallery-type feel in my store."



Sterling silver earrings inlayed with natural gold nuggets, accented with diamonds and 14kt gold. Below them, earrings made of natural gold nuggets.

"Jewelry design is different from other art forms," Taylor observes, "especially when you are commissioned to create a piece for an individual. You have to meet that person's needs and that can be immensely satisfying."

It can also be tricky when so much of your custom design is done through the mail. Many of Taylor's customers are vacationing and don't have the time to spend creating a unique piece. In this case, drawings and then wax patterns are sent back and forth until both the customer and the artist know and feel good about what the final product will be. "It just takes a little more time," Taylor says.

When designing pieces for the showcase, Taylor most often uses 18kt. gold, diamonds and colored stones. Blue topaz and opal (which he cuts himself) are two favorites. "There's just something about a deep London blue topaz that really stimulates my creativity, and opals are fun because you're never sure what you'll find once you start cutting."

Taylor, a former professional musician and then restaurant manager, is pleased to have finally made his art his profession. "I find I'm drawing on all my experience to make it work. My creativity is being satisfied, as it was when I was drumming, and the business acumen I developed managing restaurants helps me deal successfully with people and with numbers. It's really an ideal situation . . . well, it would be ideal if I had a sailboat . . ." With that, Taylor's mind seems to drift, and you can see that his spirit has flown for the moment and is sailing across a topaz blue sea. □

IN SEARCH OF Sierra Gold

. . . the beginner's guide to striking it rich in the Sierra!

By John Henderson, photos by Merle Porter

Imagine the excitement of finding a gold nugget in a stream flowing down the slopes of the Sierra! Fall is the perfect time of year to prospect for gold in the streams and rivers of the Sierra. Water levels are at their lowest and the crisp mountain air and magnificent fall colors will equal the glitter of that nugget.

Placer gold can be found in many dry and wet riverbeds throughout the Sierra, especially near known mining sites. In order to increase your chances of finding Sierra Gold, and to insure a pleasurable experience, be prepared before you go prospecting.

Two of the most important points to research are:

1. Where gold and other minerals of interest have been found.
2. Who owns the mineral rights at these sites.

The answers to these questions can be found by visiting or writing your local Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office.

If you have a particular area in mind, you will need to know the township, range and section of the area, then your BLM office can tell you whether or not a claim exists on that particular piece of land. The people at your BLM office will be glad to help you in any way they can, it's their job. Once you determine if there is a claim and who holds it, contact them by mail or telephone and ask their permission to do a little "weekend prospecting" on their claim. Be sure to tell them the date of your planned trip and how long you will be in the area. If you can get written permission, you are better off doing so. Be sure to honor their decision and, no matter what it is, thank them.

It is important to be well prepared. Therefore, you must determine the mineral status of the area you plan to explore. Some public land is closed to mineral exploration. The following list of maps will be of help to you in identifying these areas.

MINERAL and LAND STATUS MAPS

These maps are relatively new. They are available from your BLM office and show private and public land by township, range and section. They cover an area of

approximately 1,768 square miles, and show newer roads and trails not found on the older topographic maps.

U.S.G.S. TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

These maps are generally considered to be the most accurate, especially the newer 7.5 Minute Series. When the most recent U.S.G.S. topo maps are used with the MLS maps described above, an accurate determination of open or closed land can be made.

COUNTY MINING MAPS

These maps, when available, can provide a good overall idea where the mining activity is in your area of interest. They are updated every 2 to 6 months in most areas.

Once you have decided where to look, what do you look for? James Marshall showed us in 1848 when he discovered a gold nugget the size of a dime at Sutter's Mill on the American River near Sacramento, California. This was the first major gold discovery in California and with it came the famous Gold Rush of 1849. This was a placer deposit, which is basically a mineral deposit that results from the erosion of disintegrating materials from a lode deposit. Placer material is normally found in sand, gravel, silt and clay deposits, and in wet and dry riverbeds.

A lode deposit is generally considered to be a mineral bearing area in hard rock that occurs in places such as a vein of gold bearing quartz.

A gold mine of information is available from local state and county Bureau of Mines about known placer claims. Additional information is also available from the Department of Geology and/or Minerals.

Placer mining has gained popularity in recent years because the methods used are relatively simple and the price of gold has increased to over $400 an ounce. Any riverbed, wet or dry, can yield gold. Older wet or ancient wet or dry rivers or lakes are your best bet.

The specific gravity of gold is 19.3. This means that it weighs 19 times more than an equal amount of water. Because of this, gold gets trapped in bed rock, between the rocks and crevices, on the down stream side of large boulders or other objects in the stream. The flowing water has a hard time picking it up again and it just lays there waiting for someone like you to find it. You should also explore sand bars on the inside bend of the river.

There are several methods used to extract gold from placer deposits. The three most popular and economical methods are panning, sluice box (in wet riverbeds), and dry washers (in dry riverbeds). Dredging and scuba diving with a suction device are other more complicated methods you may want to explore on your own.

For the beginner, panning is the easiest method of extraction. The pan can be anything from a large wooden salad bowl with sloped sides to the commercial plastic black or green pans with riffles to trap the gold.

Besides the pan, basic panning equipment includes a round-point shovel, a small pick, a rock hammer, a straightened coathanger with a hook on the end (for getting material out of crevices), a screen (1/2" wire

Est. 1960

the Dials ROCK SHOP

Ralph & Dorthea
(209) 966-2127

Send for your Complete GOLD PANNING STARTER KIT!
$9.95 plus 6% sales tax
Add $3.00 for shipping.

Gold Nuggets •
Gold & Silver Jewelry •
Indian Jewelry •
Rhodonite Jewelry & Carvings •
Thorp's Original Black Hills Gold Jewelry •

4006 Hwy. 140/P.O. Box 387/Mariposa, CA 95338

AZURE
GEM & MINERAL
Bishop, CA

Lapidary • Crystals
Custom Jewelry & Repairs

206 West Line Street
Bishop, California 93514
OPEN 10-5 Tues-Sat

Experience the thrill of finding GOLD!

GOLD PROSPECTING TRIPS

We teach you where and how to GET THE GOLD! Experience the thrill of FINDING REAL GOLD!

WRITE FOR FREE BROCHURE —

GOLD PROSPECTING EXPEDITIONS
18172 Main Street/P.O. Box 974/Jamestown, CA 95327
Telephone: (209) 984-GOLD

There's someplace like home!

Just like going home, you'll receive a warm welcome at the Tahoe Chalet Inn . . . a new Inn with an old idea — devoted to pleasing you!

Our guests enjoy fresh pastries and coffee each morning. And, newly remodeled rooms decorated in soft colors and oak giving them a European atmosphere.

At our low prices you can afford to treat yourself to the luxury of a European style inn with good ol' American hospitality.

Come stay with us soon — you're home-away-from-home when visiting Lake Tahoe. Just three blocks from casinos, one block from the lake, and five minutes to skiing!

In California, Call Toll Free —
(800) 821-2656

TAHOE CHALET INN

P.O. Box 183
South Lake Tahoe, CA 95705
(916) 544-3311

mesh), sample buckets, as well as sample vials to hold your discoveries, a magnet, magnifying lens, non-magnetic tweezers, plastic eye dropper, or squeeze bottle. The last three items are for picking the gold out of the pan.

In order to pan in a dry riverbed, you need a water source. Either bring along a five-gallon can of water or fill the sample buckets with material for panning and take them to a water source.

Panning takes practice, but it is relatively simple. These steps are for panning at a stream or river but can be adapted when you take dry material to a water source.

1. Find a spot in the stream where the water is moderately deep and flowing fast enough to carry off the muddy water.

2. Fill your pan about half full of the dirt you want to wash. Dip the pan into the stream and fill it with water. Holding the pan with one hand, use the other hand to break up any clods and remove any large rocks. Be sure to look at the rocks carefully, they might be nuggets!

3. With a gentle circular motion, swirl the gravel around the pan. This will make the lighter material come to the top.

4. Dip the pan into the water and allow this lighter dust and clay to float away.

5. When the water is clear, again pick out the largest pebbles and, after you look at them carefully, throw them away.

6. Keeping the pan just under the water, tip it slightly away from you. Begin swirling the water around the pan and with a slight, forward, tossing motion, carefully force the lighter materials out of the pan.

7. From time to time, level the pan and gently shake it back and forth. This will cause lighter material to come to the top and the gold sink to the bottom.

8. Repeat the above process until only the heavier materials remain in the bottom of the pan. This will usually be black sand with the gold underneath.

9. Take your pan out of the stream and pour off most of the water leaving about one-half inch to cover the black sand. Shake everything to the front of the pan by tilting it forward. Now tilt the pan toward you and start swirling again until the black sands are removed and only the gold remains. Use your tweezers to pick out the gold flakes and put them in your sample vials for safe keeping.

Prospecting and panning for gold takes patience and practice, but when you find that first flake of gold, it is well worth the effort. Fool's gold, or iron pyrite is very different from gold. By the time you've panned down to the black sand, all or most of the iron pyrite should be gone. If you are in doubt as to whether that yellow stuff at the bottom of your pan is gold, put the pan in shadow. If the yellow stuff still shines, it's gold. Another way to test it is to find a hard flat surface and tap the yellow stuff with your rock hammer. If it shatters, it's not gold. If it flattens out, it is.

For more information on gold and its history, visit your local library and museum.

HAPPY PROSPECTING! □

tree, it is a 70-foot modified rope ladder, which he climbs without the use of his feet. "I call it a rope ladder, but elsewhere they call it a Bachar Ladder," he says, tying a belay line around his waist. "It's funny. Where you live, they're jealous and don't want to call anything after you. In other places, they idolize you and name everything after you."

With a soft, determined hand-over-hand pull, Bachar glides to the top of the ladder. Without the use of his feet, he must utilize his tremendous upper body strength. Though he never thrashes about or appears to struggle, his bulging back and shoulder muscles indicate maximum exertion.

Back down on the ground, in the lengthening shadows of the forest, Bachar puts on a T-shirt that reads "Damn the Rules, It's the Feeling That Counts," beneath a picture of a man playing a saxophone.

"John Coltrane," he says, identifying the man on the sax. "One of my heros. He was so dedicated, he used to practice eight hours a day, then go play gigs at night. He once lived in a place where he couldn't make noise, so he'd blow silent scales for two hours at a time. Dedication, I admire that."

Bachar recalls an article on him wherein the author referred to John as "The Babe Ruth of Climbing." "I didn't like that very much," he says. "Ruth had talent, but he wasn't very dedicated. I would have preferred 'The Marvin Hagler of Climbing.' Or maybe 'The Bruce Lee.' Yeah, or John Coltrane."

Bachar has played the saxophone for years, and it is rumored that he plays it while driving. "Only on the straightways," he says, smiling uninhibitedly now. "When I go to L.A. on business, I'll put on the jazz tape, steer with my knees and jam to the music."

In his gym, Bachar straps a watch around a conventional pullup bar. Then he clips a 20-pound weight to the harness belt that he wears. It dangles in front of him, suggestive of some medieval torture. For the next twenty minutes, he does sets of three one-armed pullups, resting a minute between sets.

"You hear a lot now about the 'Type T' personalities of the people doing risk sports. Supposedly these Type T's get off on danger. I don't buy it. They may start climbing because of the danger, but real climbers won't stay with it for that reason. We have a saying: 'There are old climbers and there are bold climbers, but there are no old bold climbers.' I think people do the so-called risk sports because they find their jobs aren't physically demanding. So they get out and climb a rock.

". . . I might pretend that a light switch has suddenly been turned on and that electricity is surging through me . . . it works great for a two-second move."

In preparation for his next set of pullups, Bachar closes his eyes and steadies his breathing. "I practice mental imagery while I'm working out," he says. "That way I can use it on the rock, when it really matters. I might pretend that a light switch has suddenly been turned on and that electricity is surging through me and there's nothing anybody can do to stop it. It works great for a two-second move."

At other times, Bachar imagines that his fingers are steel hooks, and given his prodigious displays of strength, he must have an excellent imagination. *People Magazine* ran a photo of Bachar that caused their readers to gasp collectively. He is doing a one-armed hang from a rock ledge, high over oblivion. "That was a pretty big ledge," he says. "I can hang from something like that for over a minute anyway."

"But the sport is as much mental as physical," he adds. "Take that slack chain. Lots of people could walk back and forth on it when it's only two feet off the ground. But put it 100 feet up and see what happens. It's the same physical event, but it tweaks you mentally to be that high without protection."

Unquestionably, Bachar has great physical ability — the required strength and balance — and he works harder than anybody else to stay in shape. But he feels his real advantage over others is from the neck up. Mental toughness. The ability to concentrate during gripping situations.

"You have to be able to look at a climbing problem logically, dispassionately. Up on the rock, you don't get textbook situations. You need to be able to stay cool and improvise. Pre-visualization. I can look ahead and see that certain moves are not going to work. A knowledge of the body is helpful, but even more important is an intuitive feeling for what it can do in tough situations."

It makes sense that John Bachar is a great rock climber, because he loves it so much. When he talks about it, he is uncharacteristically animated. "It's goddamn great," he effuses. "I can't understand why people play baseball when they could be climbing. It's so many things, not just one. Outdoors . . . Beautiful, with unbelievable exposures . . . Mentally challenging, gives you a chance to face fear and overcome it . . . And it's so natural, little boys are always climbing trees, aren't they? But the real reward is being able to look within, to learn about myself. It's a transient thing, that's why I keep going back up the rock — to relearn it."

"I don't have a list of goals. I'm like a dancer working on his dance. It may seem like I'm doing the same thing over and over, but each time it's a new experience. Each time I'll be more in control, more efficient, more artistic . . ."

But what about the approval of the fans? What about the cheers of the crowd that greet other great sportsmen when they finish their event? Doesn't Bachar miss the sound of applause?

As he removes the harness from his waist, his lips widen to a smile. Then a laugh. "Ha!" he cries. "I'd rather hear the wind."□

SIERRA PROPERTIES

Owens Valley Realty — Better Homes and Gardens®

306 W. Line St./Bishop, CA 93514/(619) 873-7109/Ron Stone, Broker

MOBILE HOME LOTS — Bishop. Great High Sierra views. All underground utilities. Owner financing!

RANCHETTE — 2 1/2 acres, crossfenced, barns, corrals, stream, ponds, adjacent to vacant land. Rustic ranch house has magnificent views.

BROOKSIDE DRIVE — Custom home has pella windows, 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, two separate heating and cooling systems. Trout ponds, lots of used brick. No. 423

A COMPLETE Real Estate Office!

ASPENDELL — Set in the pines near Bishop Creek. Lovely custom mountain home has lots of windows, deck, satelite dish, 2 car garage and shop. No. 388.

ROCKING K RANCH — Unique home design - oriented toward bringing in the outdoors with plenty of windows. Lots of slate and granite used inside for easy maintenance. Ponds, view and more on this large parcel. No. 127.

GRANDVIEW — West Bishop. **Just $88,000** gets this cute 3 bedroom, 2 bath home with stream and trees. N. 399.

On Scenic June Lake

Boulder Lodge

OFF-SEASON MID-WEEK SPECIALS

ONE NIGHT FREE

(School holidays excluded)

Inquire about our
HONEYMOON CABINS
With Fireplace & Private Spa

DELUXE MOTEL UNITS
DELUXE APARTMENTS
LAKE VIEW SUITES
HOUSEKEEPING CABINS

INDOOR POOL • GAMEROOM
WHIRLPOOL

P.O. BOX 68A, JUNE LAKE, CA 93529

For reservations —

(619) 648-7533

Located in the Beautiful Inyo National Forest

APPROVED AAA

For FAST, FRIENDLY and ACCURATE Title and Escrow Services

Inyo-Mono TITLE COMPANY

Serving Inyo & Mono Counties

Authorized agent for —
TICOR TITLE INSURANCE

P.O. Box 1030/Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(Main St. West - Next to Whiskey Creek)
Telephone: (619) 934-3302

407 W. Line St., Suite 2/Bishop, CA 93514
Telephone: (619) 873-5821

Each office independently owned and operated.

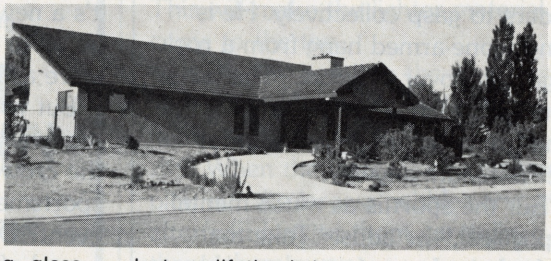
REALTY WORLD® Parker & Cluff

REALTOR®

Gene & May Jane Brant
Sales Associates
178 East Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 872-4781

NEW LISTING!

Custom West Bishop Home



3,100 sq. ft. on .72 acres. Three bedrooms, 2 baths - master bath has 24k gold plated fixtures and plumbed for hot tub. Cathedral ceilings and lush new carpet. Huge airy kitchen has Nu-Tone food processing center, built-in toaster, GE dishwasher with three interchangeable doors to match your decor. Cedar-lined closets. 2"x 6" construction with 3/4" stucco on exterior walls. Five sliding glass doors lead to 40'x 60' courtyard. Eleven fruit trees, three ponds with bridges over connecting streams. 2 1/2 car garage with same R-19 insulation used throughout home. Concrete tile roof will last a lifetime! Lovely, woodsy and private with spectacular views! Asking $257,013. Call Mary Jane or Gene Brant for appointment — Days: (619) 872-4781, Evenings: (619) 872-1867.

ALPINE DELI

HOMEMADE:
SALADS
SANDWICHES
HOT DISHES
DESSERTS
(619) 648-7633

June Lake Loop

LOCATED ON BEAUTIFUL JUNE LAKE

One & Two Bedroom Cabins
Fully Equiped Kitchens

Lake Front Cabins

YOUR RESORT FOR SKIING, HUNTING, FISHING
& FAMILY VACATIONS!
FOR RESERVATIONS:
P.O. BOX 87/JUNE LAKE, CA 93529
(619) 648-7527

Your Hosts:
Bob and Diana

SPECIALIZING IN FRESH SEAFOOD and FINE BEEF

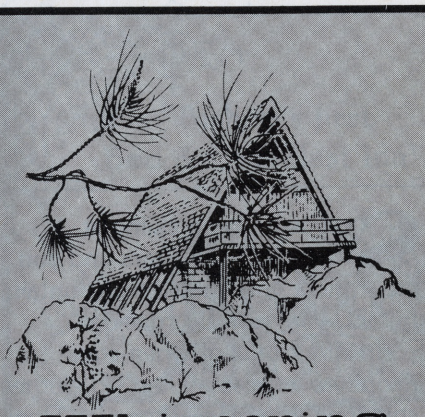
For the finest Lake View Dining and Cocktails, or a Light Snack in our Coffee Shop.

JUNE LAKE, CA
SIERRA INN

The Sierra Inn offers something for the entire family at reasonable prices!

HOURS: 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Your Hosts: Bill & Diane Nichols

Telephone:
(619) 648-7774



Whispering Pines

5 NIGHT SPECIAL
$40 — 2 PERSONS
Rates Slightly Higher November 1st.

COMPLETE HOUSEKEEPING UNITS

Telephone: (619) 648-7762
Star Route 3, Box 14-B
June Lake, California 93529

JUNE LAKE PROPERTIES
INCORPORATED

Complete
Real Estate Service
Professional • Courteous

POST OFFICE BOX 238
JUNE LAKE, CA 93529
(619) 648-7505

CONDOMINIUM RENTALS
the largest selection
available — 2 to 12 people
- Birch Creek
- Sierra Suns
- Interlaken
- Edgewater

1-800-648-JUNE

JUNE LAKE
COUNTRY STORE

- MOBILE GASOLINE
- GROCERIES
- BEVERAGES
- GIFTS

The June Lake Loops' Only
VCR & Video Tape Rentals!

(619) 648-7750

You think you know Mammoth?

MAMMOTH TRIVIA QUIZ

by Susan Vreeland

So you've been skiing at Mammoth for years and you think you know the mountain. In fact, you secretly consider yourself a hot shot when some neophyte in mismatched ski clothes squinting at a map asks you, "Does this trail go to the Main Lodge?" Makes you feel smug, right? Or maybe someone on Chair Two asks where Stump Alley is, and you take a deep breath of cold air, roll your eyes, blithely slip off the chair at the terminal, and call back, "To the right. Have a nice run."

Maybe you shouldn't feel so smug. Some skiers can say, "I remember when this chairlift didn't even exist and we had to hike up here."

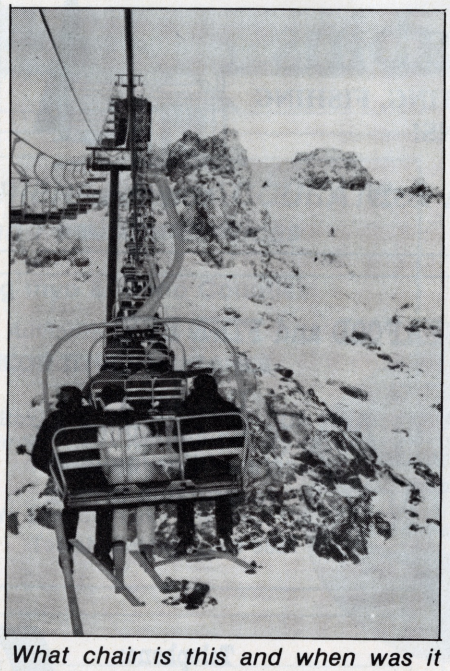
You think you know Mammoth? Let's see how you score.

History

1. When did the ski area really begin?
2. When was Chair One inaugurated and who inaugurated it?
3. What year was the biggest construction year on the mountain?
4. When did the town of Mammoth Lakes originate?
5. What is the oldest lodge in Mammoth Lakes still in operation?

Mountain Operations

6. In peak season, how many ski instructors, patrolmen and lift operators are there?
7. Which chair goes fastest, which is longest, and which rises the most vertical feet?
8. What's the highest tower on the mountain?
9. What equipment and ammunition is used for avalanche control?
10. Those big orange snow cats, just how big are they and how much do they cost?
11. In an average season how many eggs are cooked for breakfast at all lodges?



What chair is this and when was it built?

Natural Science

12. When was the biggest single snowstorm in the last 25 years?
13. What season was the heaviest and lightest snowfalls?
14. The town is called Mammoth Lakes. How many lakes are there?
15. What kind of rock is under Mammoth Mountain?
16. When was the earthquake fault on Minaret Road formed?
17. What types of trees are on Mammoth Mountain?
18. What kind of wildlife can be found on the mountain?
19. Three miles south of the turnoff for June Lake Ski Area, Highway 395 is divided by an island of woods between lanes for a quarter mile stretch. Why?

Statistics

20. Which mountain has the highest elevation — Mammoth or June?
21. As the crow flies, what's the distance between the Cornice and the Minarets?
22. What's the square footage of the Main Lodge and how many key lockers are there?
23. What's the average number of skiers annually, as well as the average weekend day?
24. What was the all-time record day for number of skiers?

Answers

1. Owner Dave McCoy, a hydrologist for the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power in the 1930's, began by running portable rope tows attached to a Model A Ford truck. In 1937 he tried out the slopes above McGee Creek, but by 1946, he had decided on Mammoth. Once they had seven tows in tandem nearly to the top of the Cornice. At first it was for friends and a few fledgling ski clubs. Later they had to charge 50 cents for gas.

2. In the early 50's the rope tows had an uphill lift capacity of 18,000 skiers per hour. Skiing was booming, and McCoy was visionary. Against all odds, against skeptics who thought the mountain too far, too remote, too stormy, in 1955 he opened Chair One. Jill Kinmont, the Olympic downhill racer who was paralyzed in a skiing accident ten months earlier, inaugurated it on Thanksgiving morning, after McCoy and his crew worked all night to finish it.

3. 1982 showed the most agressive growth. In the summer, Chairs 22 and 23 were installed, the administrative office complex above the gondola was built, and mid-chalet was expanded to five times its original size.

4. In June of 1877, gold was discovered at Red Mountain. Within a year, 1,500 people moved to "Mammoth City."

5. Tamarack Lodge at Twin Lakes was built in 1924 as a summer hunting and fishing lodge for Hollywood stars and socialites. In the late 30's it was used for ice harvesting, and, with McCoy's blessing, it opened for its first winter season in 1959-60. Now it's popular among cross-country skiers touring the Lakes Basin. Although Wildyrie Lodge near Lake Mamie predates it by three years, none of Wildyrie's original cabins are still in use, so Tamarack wins the claim.

6. 254 ski instructors, 91 patrolmen, 218 lift operators. Patrolmen work the longest hours, 12 hours a day.

7. The new Chair 25 gives the fastest ride, 475 feet per minute, although Chair 16 is the longest at 6,200 feet. Chair 9 rises the most verticle feet, 1,700, even more than the upper gondola which measures 1,300 vertical feet.

8. Tower number 13 on Chair 16 is 69 feet. Check it out.

How many Piston Bully snow cats does Mammoth Mountain have? Is this all there are?

RECORDTOWN U.S.A.

- RECORDS
- COMPACT DISCS
- CASSETTES
- ALBUMS
- SINGLES
- ACCESSORIES

BLANK VIDEO CARTRIDGES
TAPE DECKS—AUTO STEREO SYSTEMS
HOURS MON-SAT 9:30-6:00

VISA 873-3660 MasterCard

140 WHITNEY ALLEY BSHP
(1 BLK EAST OF MAIN ST)

"Bishop's first Bed & Breakfast Inn"

In the tradition of the early pioneers, we offer a warm, friendly atmosphere. You'll find relaxing easy as you enjoy the beauty of the High Sierra.

Set in the shadow of the snow-capped Sierra, we invite you to stay with us when visiting the Owens Valley.

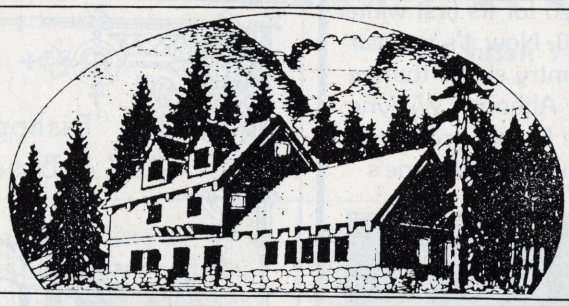
The Matlick House
1313 Rowan Lane - Bishop, California 93514
RESERVATIONS: (619) 873-3133
Nanette Robidart, Innkeeper

BISHOP COIN SHOP
Buy, Sell & Trade Gold & Silver

Open: 9:30-5:00/Tues thru Sat
Owners: H.G.(Bud) & Lois Foote

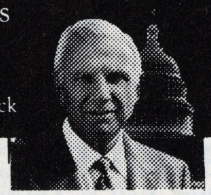
174 W. Line St./Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 872-2487

FREE HBO TV • DIRECT-DIAL PHONES • LOUNGE WITH FIREPLACE •
MAMMOTH
SKIING • FISHING • HUNTING
HIKING • SAILING • TENNIS
NORDIC SKIING • RELAXING
Family Rates Available!
The International Inn
A FAMILY RESORT
P.O. Box 1089/Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546/(619) 934-2542
On Hwy. 203 in the Center of Mammoth Lakes
FREE COFFEE • COIN-OP LAUNDRY
LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING • COLOR TV • SAUNA • HEATED POOL • HOT JET SPA •



GLACIER LODGE
Offering YEAR 'ROUND Accomodations and Fine Dining for the Traveler & Sportsman
Dinner served 6-10 P.M. o Complete Dinner from $8.95
Reservations Required
Breakfast served 7:30-9:30 A.M.
Lodge Rooms &*Housekeeping Cabins $60.00 per night
**Two persons/two night minimum stay.*
Located 11 miles west of Big Pine, California in the Inyo National Forest — Trailhead to the John Muir Wilderness and Palisade Glacier for backpacking, XC skiing and hiking.
Your New Hosts: Mark & Janet Korpela
Please write for FREE brochure:
Glacier Lodge
P.O. Box 370/Big Pine, CA 93513
Or call for reservations: (619) 872-0295

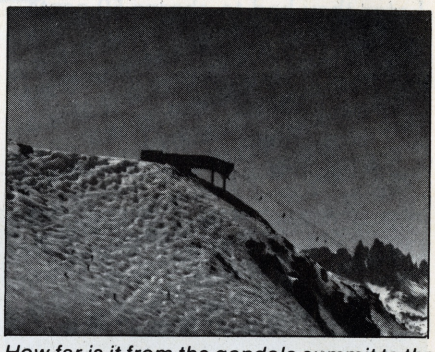
"H&R Block finds more Americans a bigger refund."
— Henry Block



H&R Block's trained tax preparers understand the new tax laws. We'll answer your questions and find you the biggest refund you're entitled to. Stop by soon and plan ahead for next year — so you'll get back everything you've got coming.
H&R BLOCK
THE INCOME TAX PEOPLE
136 Whitney Alley
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-6166

Tax Planning •
Investments •
Self-Directed IRA's •
Investments through
BOARDWALK CAPITAL CORP.
James J. Kennington
136 Whitney Alley, Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-6166

9. Three types: hand charges, that is, two-pound sticks of dynamite thrown into chutes to dislodge snow; .75 milimeter recoilless rifles at permanent gun mounts on top of Chair One, on Lincoln Mountain, (Chair 22) and behind Red's Lake (bottom of Chair 14); a portable avalancher which shoots a thin, stabilized rocket with compressed gas which explodes when it hits target. "During the heavy storms of 1986 the patrol shot 20 days in a row." says Gary Reitman, Head Patrolman. "After they shoot, they've got to ski across each area to dislodge any snow pillows. Half a dozen times a year a patrolman will get knocked down or get partially buried in an avalanche, but only once in twenty years have we had to dig one of our guys out."



How far is it from the gondola summit to the Minarets in the distance?

10. Kassbehrer Piston Bullies, turbo-charged V6 diesel engines manufactured by Mercedes Benz, are fourteen feet wide and weigh 16,000 pounds. Mammoth/June Ski Area owns 30 of them. "It's a real rush to toboggan down Cornice or under Chair Three, freefalling in a $120,000 piece of machinery," says Jim Yost, five year veteran of the night cat crew.

11. "Oh about 40,000," says Bob Wallace, Food and Beverage Manager. "That's 40,000 dozen. Add to that a thousand pounds of hash browns, 600 pounds of sausage, and 900 pounds of bacon. We start at four or five in the morning."

12. February 12-20, 1986 the skies dropped 157 inches at mid-chalet. February seems to be the month most likely for a big dump. February 1969 is a close second, with 156

inches, but that was measured in town, so you can argue. For a single day, February 7, 1969 wins, with 34 inches, but who's counting?

13. No, the lightest snowfall wasn't last year which measured 107 inches. In 1976-77 only 90 inches fell. Heaviest snowfall was in 1982-83 when Mammoth was buried under 567 inches.

14. Depends on how you count. Assuming Twin Lakes counts as two, even though they're connected, there are six in the Lakes Basin that

What was the biggest construction year on Mammoth Mountain?

can be driven to: Mary (the largest), Mamie, George, Horseshoe, and the Twins. In the higher elevations and at trailheads are McCloud, Crystal, and T.J. Barrett.

15. As part of the Long Valley Caldera, an area 18 miles across, Mammoth Mountain is a ryro-dacite dome or uplift of volcanic material estimated to have been created about 130,000 years ago. Mammoth Mountain is considered a quiet, or dormant volcano. It is classified as an accumlative volcano, meaning that it took many eruptions to build the mountain during its active stage.

16. The crack is actually a fissure, not a fault, because each side is a carbon copy of the other. It only separated 15-20 feet. It did not slide. The action happened a mere 100,000 years ago.

17. Jeffrey Pine, Lodgepole Pine, Mountain Hemlock, White Bark Pine, White Fir and California Red Fir are all found within the ski area.

18. Animal tracks of Snowshoe rabbit, coyote and chickaree, or Douglas squirrel are common. A black bear was sighted in the Twin Lakes area (the backside of the ski

the Mammoth mall
LOCATED ON
Old Mammoth Road
1 Block South of
Highway 203

O'KELLY and DUNN Co.
BREAKFAST
&
LUNCH
—CATERING—
• CARDS
• FINE GIFTS
934-9316
(OPEN 6:30 AM CLOSED TUES.)

Coming in October . . .
Greeting Cards
and
Party Supplies
The one-stop shop for all your business and personal printing needs!
Two convenient locations to serve you —
Expanding to offer you more!
KITTLE
PRINTERS and STATIONERS
Mammoth Mall
Mammoth Lakes, CA
(619) 934-6718
187 W. Line St.
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-4074

PET PANTRY
Home Of:
Happy, Healthy, Tropical
Fish, Birds & Small Pets
HOURS: 10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
SCIENCE DIET
934-GRUB

Kriss Kringle's
Mammoth Lake's Only
Year 'Round
Christmas Shop
P.O. Box 3388
Mammoth Mall
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(619) 934-6887

Skiing in the Sierra

REI gets you there with fast, efficient service.

At REI, we make shopping by mail the convenience it was meant to be. Whether you're skiing in the local backcountry or gearing up to climb the Himalayas, your order will be on its way within 24 hours of receipt. Our staff takes pride in knowing REI products and providing the service that keeps our customers coming back.

► **You can count on REI gear to be dependable.** Our full-time quality control team rigorously tests the items we carry. Our money-back guarantee ensures your satisfaction.

► **REI is the nation's largest consumer cooperative with 1.9 million members.** Membership is not required to shop at REI, but one of the benefits is a yearly patronage dividend based on your regular price purchases through mail order or in our stores nationwide. In the past four years, REI has declared patronage dividends totaling over $24 million.

☐ **Please send me a free REI catalog of outdoor gear and clothing, which also has information on becoming an REI member.**

Please print clearly.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Mail to: REI, DEPT. 2520, P.O. Box C-88127, Seattle, WA 98188-0127.

REI®

Quality Outdoor Gear and Clothing Since 1938

NATURALLY®
VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS, INC.

Holmes Health Haven

Our 17th year of serving you!

10% Discount On Bulk Items (Dry, Canned, or Frozen)

NATURAL FOODS
VEGETARIAN FOODS
DIETETIC FOODS
VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS
COSMETICS

192 WEST LINE ST. - BISHOP, CA. 93514 - (619) 872-5571

area) last year, and in the past there have been mountain lions, though no sightings have been reported for several years.

19. For squirrels, of course. The four-lane Highway 395 goes right through a Douglas squirrel mating habitat. The average Douglas squirrel at top speed can run across a two-lane road and beat out an oncoming car, but it can't make it

What is this skier saying?

What is this skier saying?

across four lanes. Since this is a mating ground, too many squirrels rushing to meet their love on the other side of the highway would have ended up splattered and the squirrel population would have been severely cut back. A humane solution orchestrated by a single woman, Enid Larson, who campaigned for her furry friends.

20. The upper gondola terminal at Mammoth is 11,053 feet, and the vertical rise from the lowest base facility is 3,100 feet; the summit of June Mountain is 10,212 feet, and the vertical rise is 2,562 feet.

21. 8.2 miles The Minarets , in Ansel Adams Wilderness Area, are at a higher elevation, 12,281, so you'd have to fly uphill.

22. The square footage of all levels of the Main Lodge is 140,000, with 857 key lockers, not counting season lockers. (And you were person number 858 one day last season, right?)

23. Average number of skiers annually over a five year period is 1,329,000, while an average weekend day (taken from opening to closing, even if that's as late as July) is

Who is this man?

10,690. More typical mid-season, however, is a weekend of 17,000 skiers.

25. Thanksgiving Day, 1985, over 22,000 lift tickets were sold.

If you got all the statistical questions right, you probably play baseball, too. Or you're an engineering type.

If you scored higher than 20, call yourself "Black Diamond Bart." If you got 18-20, count yourself a true-blue Mammoth buff. If you scored 11-15, then you're a regular. If you only got half, stay on the blues. If you fell below 5, then you're a sitzmark — and, if you have to ask what that is, that proves it!

TOWN and COUNTRY CENTER
621 WEST LINE STREET
BISHOP, CALIFORNIA

"Providing Service To You Since 1952"
- Supplies
- Business Machines Sales & Service
- Office Furniture
- Computers
- SWEDA cash registers

chalfant office supplies

TWO LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU —

621 W. Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-5626

1566 Tavern Road
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(619) 934-7230

HAIR CUTS
PERMS
HAIR COLORING
MAKEUP & FACIALS
MANICURES

Line Street West
A HAIR STUDIO
MEN'S - WOMEN'S - CHILDREN'S

And NOW . . .
LICENSED THERAPIST
MASSAGE THERAPY
873-6224

OPEN MONDAY — SATURDAY

Plan your next vacation now!

AIR TICKETS
TOURS • CRUISES
Business • Pleasure
High Sierra TRAVEL

126 Old Mammoth Road
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(619) 934-3735

621 West Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-7151

THE UNDI - DRAWER & HERS

"For the Fashionable Lady"

In Bishop at 621 West Line St. (Town & Country Center) and 187 North Main St.

(619) 873-5951 (619) 873-4018

MOUNTAIN HIGH VIDEO
VCR Sales & Rentals

Open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday thru Saturday
11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays

New Arrivals Weekly
99¢ Childrens Movies

621 West Line St. • Suite 109 • Bishop, CA 93514 (619) 873-3888

Minaret SHOPPING

Rocky Mountain
CHOCOLATE FACTORY
Established 1981 ™

"The Peak of Perfection"

Hand-Dipped Chocolates
Caramel Apples
Hand-Dipped Fruits
Fudge ◆ Brittle
Truffles (Over a dozen varieties)

A wide selection of candy and gifts for all occasions!

Minaret Village Shopping Center
Post Office Box 7189
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(619) 934-6269

Mail Orders Welcome
Gift Packaging

VISA · AMERICAN EXPRESS · master charge

Mammoth Sierra Properties

"For those who demand FIRST CLASS."

Call Toll Free —
1 (800) 851-6442

Open for your convenience
7 days a week with
12 trained professionals
to expertly handle
your interests!

P.O. Box 1889 • Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 • (619) 934-4501

Fun times...

SKIWEAR · T-SHIRTS
SPORTSWEAR · SWIMWEAR
ACCESSORIES · LINGERIE
FOOTWEAR · GOURMET SHOP

SKI RENTALS

from THE OUTFITTER

Minaret Village
SHOPPING CENTER

PRIME LEASE SPACE AVAILABLE IN MAMMOTH'S FINEST SHOPPING CENTER

For Information Call Greg Newbry - (619) 934-6005
437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

1 HOUR PROCESSING!

sky king photo

SAME DAY
ENLARGEMENTS
and POSTERS

P.O. Box 7119/Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(619) 934-8415

. . . the gold at the

Village CENTER

Tim Snyder Photo

Booky Joint

ENTERTAINMENT CENTER

STEREO SYSTEMS
RECORDS
CASSETTES
VCR & VIDEO RENTALS
MAGAZINES
&
BOOKS

MINARET SHOPPING CENTER
P.O. BOX 347
MAMMOTH LAKES, CA 93546

Books: (619) 934-3240
Videos: (619) 934-2176

Design • Special Orders • Appraisals

Authorized dealer —
Original Black Hills Gold Creations

Sierra Jewelers

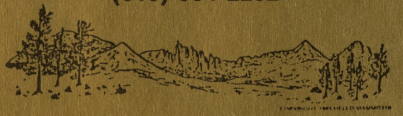
In-House Repairs
Design & Special Orders
Leonard M. Krantz, *Gemologist*

(619) 934-7272

HELLO MAMMOTH!

FINE HANDCRAFTED GIFTS
Featuring
LOCAL ARTISTS

P.O. Box 8537
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(619) 934-2252



Lasting Impressions

WOMEN'S FINE APPAREL
and ACCESSORIES

MAKE UP & SKIN CARE

(619) 934-8826

Featuring . . .
Italian Cuisine
Homemade Desserts
Whole Wheat Crust
"TAKE & BAKE" Pizza
Made on Premises
Now Serving Cocktails

GIOVANNI'S PIZZERIA

For
Take Out & Delivery —
934-7563

end of the rainbow!

Winter "Snow Flights"
Daily in Mammoth!

HIGH SIERRA
BALLOONING CO.

- Fall Color Flights
- Aerial Photography
- Scenic Owens Valley Flights

1/2 Hour & 1 Hour Flights
Group Size: 2 to 6 People
FAA Certified Licensed Pilots
Reservations should be made in advance.
Mammoth: (619) 934-7188
Office: SHELL CENTER BUILDING
(In the VIDEO)
Bishop: (619) 873-5838
201 S. Warren St., Bishop, CA 93514
Located at the GREYHOUND DEPOT

master charge
VISA

SNOW PLANT
Nature's Mystery

by June L. Varnum

The Snow Plant (*Sarcodes Sanguinea*) is a peculiar sight. Neither a true wildflower nor one that sprouts through the snow, this brazen charmer delights the senses and is a curiosity to ponder. Naturalist John Muir said, "Sarcodes, notwithstanding its glowing crimson color and proud statuesque form is singularly cold and silent, neither fragrance nor sympathy comes from its showy beauty."

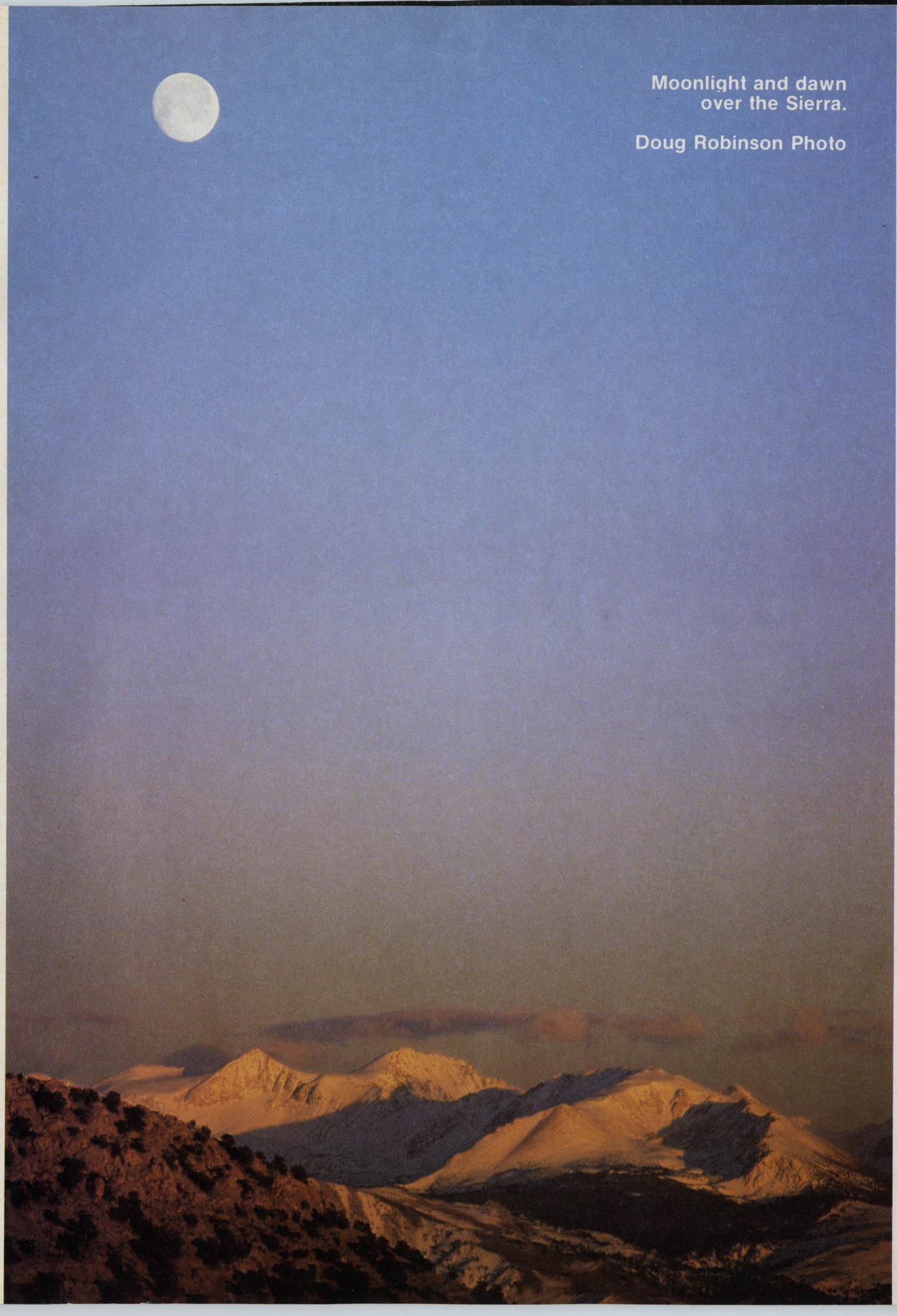
In or near stands of fir, pine or aspen, look for a thick fleshy stalk pushing through the duff and humus. You may see a single plant or as many as ten or more in a cluster. Bell-like crimson flowers and red scales cover the stem, which grows 9 to 18 inches tall. Lacking chlorophyll, Sarcodes immodestly goes without greenery.

As summer wanes, red marble-like capsules form on the stalk. By fall, these capsules expel their seeds and the crimson plumage changes to a black, reddish-brown dried stem. Small red growths form on the roots to become new plants waiting to show off the following spring.

Since 1980, botanists have tried in vain to propagate this strange flower. Enveloped by a protective ball of fungus that gathers organic material from surrounding sources, Sarcodes roots never touch soil. Transplanting disturbs this delicate balance and the plant dies. Tissue and seed germination trials have failed also.

Many Western Native Americans used the Snow Plant for food and medicine. Cut up stalks were boiled and eaten like asparagus; dried, it cured toothaches; brewed, it was a blood builder. The Snow Plant is now protected by law, so please don't pick.

George W. James wrote, "Surely there can be no flower on earth whose look so allies it to uncanny beings and powers . . . when its time comes to die, it turns black, so that even in its death, also, it looks like a fleshy thing linked to mysteries."



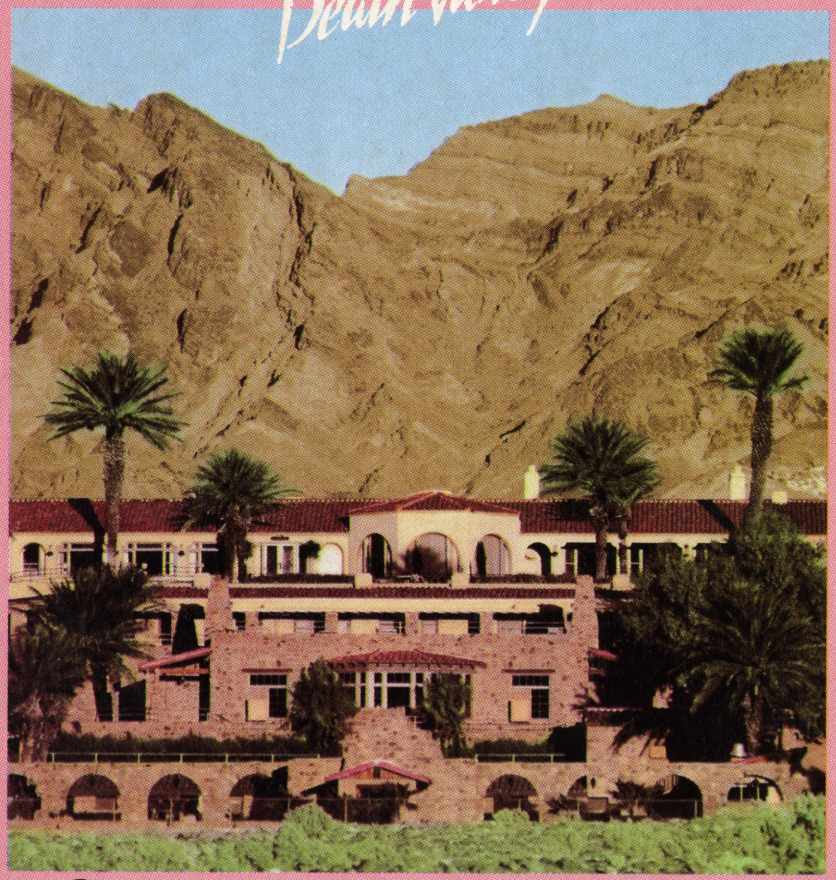
Moonlight and dawn
over the Sierra.

Doug Robinson Photo

In the opulent era of the thirties, Hollywood stars made Furnace Creek their lavish hideaway. An oasis fed by a mountain spring. A paradise of old California charm and grace. Today, it is a perfect meeting and vacation spot—without the distractions of a busy city. Furnace Creek Inn is an enclave of timeless elegance. Furnace Creek Ranch is a rustic reminder of a simpler, more relaxed time. Both feature golf, horseback riding, tennis and swimming in a naturally warm spring-fed pool. With sumptuous cuisine, fine service, and meeting rooms accommodating from 10 to 200. Furnace Creek is a special place.

FURNACE CREEK
INN & RANCH RESORT

Amfac Resorts
Death Valley



FURNACE CREEK
INN & RANCH RESORT

For information call your travel agent or Amfac Resorts in Hawaii, Napa Valley, Death Valley and the Grand Canyon. Traditional Hospitality by Fred Harvey an Amfac Company. 619-786-2345

© 1986 Fred Harvey/Amfac Resorts.